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# THE UNMAKING OF EUROPE







*Walter Barnett*

SIR EDWARD GREY

# THE UNMAKING OF EUROPE

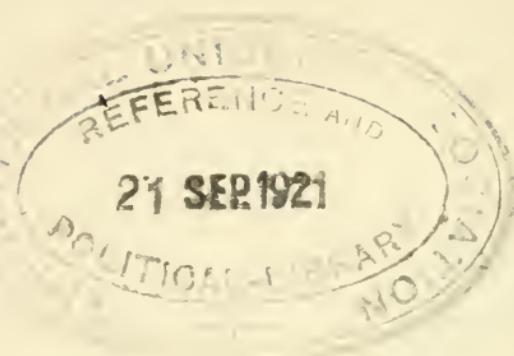
THE FIRST PHASE OF THE  
HOHENZOLLERN WAR

BY

PHILIP WHITWELL WILSON  
(“P. W. W.”)

London

NISBET & CO., LTD.  
22 BERNERS STREET, W.



*First Published in 1915*

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## LEST WE FORGET

LIBRARY STAMP

WE are all grateful for the innumerable and abundantly illustrated booklets which have brought home to us so vividly the meaning of the war as a great spectacular display in Europe. In these pages I do not ignore the battles and bombardments, the diplomacy and the "atrocities," but I approach them from what is, perhaps, an unusual angle. How does all this sacrifice of blood and treasure affect the life of nations, their finances, their ideals, their religion, their institutions? These are questions to which it is worth while to seek an answer. I have allowed that answer to suggest itself. I attempt no forecasts, but confine this record to a broad grouping of the facts.

DEC 16 1940

HARDING

All the facts cannot, in the public interest, be stated. On many matters there was more to be said. But, after a long and sometimes

wearisome study of what is publishable, I submit that on the whole we have here the materials for arriving at the essential verities of this great controversy in Christendom. We may not know all. We may not be able to say in print all that we do know. But the nation is not, on this occasion, fighting in the dark, for reasons ill-understood and impossible to define. With all respect to the historian of the future, who for centuries to come will make his living out of our strife and agony, we know to-day more than he will ever be able to discover. He will revise our judgments. We shall not be there to correct his blunders. But there will always be this distinction between our discussions and his—the first are evidence ; the second are deductions.

This volume deals with five months of war—ending on Christmas Day. Obviously, it is a story half told, though, as I think, best told while it is fresh and living in the memory. I look forward to continuing the narrative—at any rate, to preparing, week by week, the materials necessary to its continuance. In these uncertain days,

when the most uncertain element of all is the momentary preoccupation of the public, one can make no promises, but if there are some who value this attempt to furnish a picture of Europe in chaos—a book that will, perhaps, remind them in future years of the great days through which we have lived—then it would be merely keeping faith with so kindly an audience if I were to add another and companion volume on Europe in reconstruction. I trust that a second such volume will be sufficient, but, with the horizon thus dark, we know not what interval of further ruin may precede the period of painful recovery.

For the moment, it is enough to remark that the narrative, here half told—especially as it affects finance and the United States—will have to be completed, and that, with this necessity in view, I have deliberately abstained from including many events which occurred after Christmas and before these present pages went to press.

One word more of a more personal kind. For these pages I am alone responsible, yet the fact that I have been able to write them,

is one more evidence of the consideration extended over a period of nearly fifteen years, for which I am able to thank the proprietors and the Editor of the *Daily News.*

P. W. W.

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# THE UNMAKING OF EUROPE

## CHAPTER I

### THE GREAT PEACE

ON Friday, the 24th of July 1914, the world rolled forward in unbroken peace. If Rome had still been mistress of the nations, she could have closed the Temple of Janus. It was a peace, wider than the *Pax Romana*, wider even than the *Pax Britannica*; it was *Pax orbis terrarum*. So hushed was the heaving tranquillity of mankind that local troubles, mere affairs of outposts by comparison with what was to come, provoked the noisiest echoes. The faction fights, in which Mexico was bleeding to death, were localised by the Monroe Doctrine, and did not threaten the heart of civilisation. The war of drums in Ireland was as yet hypothetical. And even the fireworks in Albania, which blazed nearer to the open powder magazine of Europe, were likened in a serious journal, *The Times*, to musical comedy. The population of the world is 1600 millions. A vigilant and uncensored press, furnished with all

the resources of telegraphy, could, after searching to the uttermost parts of the earth, report that, apart from these trifling disturbances affecting at most 25 million persons, the peace was universal. This was the peace that was broken, in fact, if not in form, by the *démarche* which Austria-Hungary presented to Serbia on Thursday, the 23rd of July. The text of this historic note was known among men on Friday, the 24th.

Shielded by the mantle of that peace, the nations, each according to its degree of social evolution, were striving dimly within themselves for a more abundant life. Under the stress of new wants, a boom in trade, without precedent, whether in volume or duration, was gradually enriching countless homes. In the last completed six months British exports had been 255 millions and imports 376 millions, figures so vast that the imagination cannot picture their significance. Ships, each more colossal than its precursor, trustfully plied the ocean, with but a nominal insurance against the obsolete perils of piracy and capture by an enemy. A week after the 24th there were still a dozen British vessels lying in the port of Hamburg, their owners incredulous of war. German ships were in British harbours, or, on the high seas, were bearing British cargoes. Merchants bought and sold, not by cash or by barter, but by a delicately adjusted system of credit, the soul of which was good faith, and the machinery a network of uninterrupted communications. Nor was this trading an offence against any one of the

nations, least of all against Germany. Her annual imports to this country amounted in value to 80 millions sterling. Our exports to the Fatherland were 40 millions. The war between Germany and Great Britain thus involved a severance of economic ties amounting for those countries only to at least 120 millions a year.

At the date which we are considering, a slight lull in trade had released for investment the accrued profits of years, and with money plentiful the Bank rate was as low as 3 per cent. In the City of London the chief embarrassment was a world-wide demand for capital, as shown by the frequent appearance of prospectuses, inviting subscription on terms very favourable to persons with an inclination to lend. In London alone 150 millions was raised during the six months ending 30th June. The investment for the next three months fell to 20 millions. On that fateful Friday a dozen scrips were on the market and others were in course of flotation; indeed, one of the minor perplexities amid the subsequent chaos was the question whether later instalments should be paid on new issues of a foreign type. From Paris it was reported that German financiers were actively associating with their friends in France, Great Britain, and the United States over the formidable task of financing Brazil, and that a new loan would be speedily arranged. One result of the note to Serbia was that Brazil, away over the ocean, was driven to suspend the payments on her coupons. Nor was she alone in her default.

A shrewd and timorous eye might perhaps have detected, even among the bourses, the cloud like a monarch's hand that lay on the horizon. In twelve months the Imperial Bank of Germany had quietly raised its reserve of gold from 54 to 65 millions sterling. The Bank of France had added 30 millions to its reserve, which stood at 162 millions, while Russia held 159 millions, an increase of 18 millions. On the 22nd July, the eve of the Austrian Note, Sir Felix Schuster, addressing the shareholders of the Union of London and Smith's Bank, pointed out that "these additions to the various gold reserves were the result, not of natural, commercial, or monetary conditions, but of a deliberate policy." They were intended, said he, for "the event of grave political or financial difficulties arising." The words were serious, but so familiar was the appeal for a gold reserve that on the morrow the city went its way as usual. Consols stood at 75, German and French 3 per cents. at 75 and 80 respectively, and on that last morning of substantial peace the credit of the three nations stood inversely as the size of their armies. Premonitions there certainly were, of the financial tornado which wrecked the money markets of Europe and America. All through the month of July there was steady selling of securities on the continental bourses. The financial press had to admit that the uneasiness was due not only to the sorrows of Ulster, but also to diplomacy at Vienna. Yet even on the 18th the *Westminster Gazette*, known to be in close

touch with the Foreign Office, announced “a general upward movement in prices,” and prophesied the continuance of easy money. During the spring the price of money had been frequently under 2 per cent.; while the best securities, heavily depreciated in previous years, were at last recovering steady value.

On that 24th of July a vast multitude of unsuspecting persons—men, women, and children—were domiciled or travelling in countries other than their own. American citizens, a law-abiding and an affluent class, thronged the hotels of Europe, relying for their safety on the good faith and sanity of Governments. Most of them were unarmed, whether with pistols, with passports, or with gold. It did not occur to them that their orderly programme of pleasure or of education would be rudely interrupted by the plots of a military caste. They did not suspect that Krupps were quietly delaying the delivery of big guns for Antwerp, nor that the enterprising agents of this firm were, as was boldly alleged, laying concrete platforms on French soil for the howitzers which were to bombard Maubeuge. Countless English families were occupied with their arrangements for the summer—seaside and shooting, camps for boys, and country holidays for children of the city. The King was to attend Goodwood. The Emperor William was to be represented at Cowes. Prince Henry of Prussia was a guest, incognito, of this country. The little Prince of Brunswick, grandson of the Kaiser by his daughter, was to enjoy

the style of “Highness” within the British Dominions. In a sentence, there was an appearance of perfect amity between the Powers.

Even the harbour of Kiel, buttressed with fortifications, was illuminated with the radiance of peace. A squadron of British battleships had visited Cronstadt, and on its return was detained by the profuse hospitality of the Kaiser. The sailors of the two Navies fraternised, exchanged toasts, sang choruses, and joined in the rough games of the sea. “The Anglo-German *rapprochement* is progressing most happily,” so wrote an impressionable eye-witness; the Emperor makes “as wonderful a figure against the sky as ever Napoleon made on the *Bellerophon*”; in these festivities was “the outward and visible sign of the real and deeper spirit of cordiality in which British and German minds are now rejoicing.” So, indeed, it seemed; and in London, at a German function, Prince Lichnowsky, the Ambassador, talked of “the unclouded skies.” It was the precise phrase used by Lord Grenville, as Foreign Secretary, a few weeks before the war of 1870.

Yet, beneath the surface, there still lurked the demon of suspicion. The German newspaper, *Lokalanzeiger*, coolly observed that no political importance should be attached to the festivities since Mr. Churchill was absent. At the launch of a liner, bearing the great name of Bismarck, the Emperor quoted that statesman’s not very profound remark that, “We Germans fear God, and

otherwise absolutely nothing and no one in this world." While the Emperor was welcomed more than once to the flagship, *King George V.*, the latest of super-Dreadnoughts, where for the last time he wore his uniform as a British Admiral of the Fleet, it is doubtful if he was shown the new system of fire control or other naval secrets of importance. A turret officer, who hinted at this, was quietly answered by a German comrade with the question, "Do you expect him to close his eyes as he walks through your flagship?" By a coincidence the Emperor, when thus amusing himself at Kiel, was joined by Herr Krupp von Bohlen, who had just spent a few pleasant weeks in England, where he had inspected as much as he was allowed to see of the great armament works which flourish in this country. And in the Royal Academy there hung the final labour of Von Herkomer's brush, a vast canvas containing a group of Krupp Directors gathered for business in their council chamber.

In July 1914 the British did not look like a people prepared for war. Prosperity was slowly permeating the social organism. As the basis of comfort broadened, there developed new luxuries, new methods of wasting time and money, new excitements and endeavours after display. Never had there been such lavish expenditure over pageants like Ascot, or over those amazing romps which repeatedly filled the Albert Hall in London with costume and revelry. Religion, both among rich and poor, was at a low ebb, and that infallible barometer of the moral weather—the drink bill—

was again rising. To the German resident—we defer the use of the word spy—who desired that his Government should be accurately informed about the fighting capacity of Great Britain, these were important symptoms. Such a man would be doubtless impressed by the thunders of Ulster, by the splutterings of the militant women, and the low, ominous ground-swell of labour. The entire opposition told him that civil war would quickly bring about the downfall of Mr. Asquith's Administration. Not many months earlier, Sir Edward Carson had been received at luncheon by the Kaiser himself, and the conversation would be hardly calculated to minimise the reality of these alleged perils. The anxiety of King George had been expressed both in public and in private. The air was full of the rumour that somehow or other there would be a change of advisers. Moreover, the great authority of Earl Roberts was invoked on behalf of compulsory military service, which crusade had of necessity to be inspired by the belief that a voluntary army was inadequate for the needs of a European war. These circumstances pointed unmistakably to the theory, full of comfort for the Prussian Junker, that England was in decay, encompassed by difficulties, and uncertain of the loyal support of her various dependencies. If there were war in Europe, she must remain neutral.

Another fact, tending to the same conclusion, was the determined campaign, led by Mr. Lloyd George, against ill-housing, low wages, and disease.

The policy of amelioration was still in an initial stage, yet the British Budget stood at 207 millions. With the outbreak of war, all that was meant by domestic reform would fall under an interdict. The Coalition, on which Mr. Asquith depended, would be threatened with instant ruin. Even Mr. Bonar Law, who spared no rhetoric on other topics, had made it clear that no words of his would be of a kind to provoke complications with Germany. Speaking in the House of Commons on the 11th of July, three weeks after the tragedy at Sarajevo, he declared that the real question was not how we were to maintain the peace of Europe, but how we were to maintain the peace of the United Kingdom. That was at a sitting devoted to foreign affairs, and what were the subjects selected for discussion ? They were of the usual category—the decay of Persia, the maltreatment of Albania, the Mesopotamian Railway, and copious compliments to Sir Edward Grey—compliments to which even Mr. Arthur Ponsonby, the arch-critic of the Triple Entente, subscribed—for his successful efforts to improve relations with Germany. For those compliments there seemed to be a solid basis. With the passing of the Moroccan crisis, a menacing liability had disappeared. Germany and Great Britain were co-operating both in the Middle East and in the Balkans. The harsh rivalry of the group system in Europe was mitigated by conciliatory influences. Count Metternich, the German Ambassador in London at the time of the Agadir affair, had been

replaced, first by Von Bieberstein, perhaps the most considerable of German statesmen, and, when he died, by Prince Lichnowsky, a firm upholder of peace between the two nations. During that period it would have been criminal to suggest, nor was it suggested in any responsible quarter, that the diplomatic friendship, which seemed to be so greatly flourishing, was merely an attempt to detach Great Britain from active support of France, if and when the selected moment for war should arrive.

Among the British and German peoples there were many agencies that made for peace. For years past, ministers of religion, journalists, scientists and wage-earners had exchanged visits, with hospitable intent. A few weeks before the outbreak of war the Freemasons of France, Germany, Great Britain, and other countries—men of weight and influence within their powerful craft—had shared mysterious hospitality. Preparations were actually afoot for the invasion of Berlin, not with the tramp of armed men, but with the milder incursion of a British Imperial Choir, instructed in those German masterpieces which have conquered the world. While war was brewing behind the scenes, arrangements were being made, in addition, for the Olympic games which unite all nations, while a convention for peace was to sit in characteristic innocence at Constance. One at least of the delegates, proceeding to Berlin to continue his conciliatory mission, was suddenly entangled in the net of war and detained for

months as prisoner. Another delegate was the venerable Dr. Clifford, a man of peace if ever there was one, who to the end resisted the South African War. He returned to London, and, in a month, was declaring that the Prussian idol must be broken. In a memorable article, one distinguished editor of Liberal persuasion denounced the proposal that Great Britain should fight with Russia against Germany. In a few weeks he also was exposing the Emperor William as the enemy of mankind. Thus was shattered the golden bridge between two mighty peoples. As one notable advocate of Anglo-German amity bluntly expressed it, "We've been had." The tragedy of the business was that this colloquialism also expressed the sentiments of Germans who on their side had been working for friendship with Great Britain.

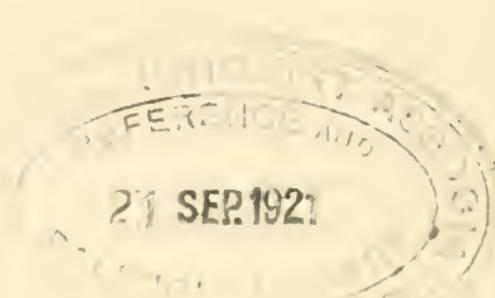
In both countries the organised masses of the people desired not peace alone, but a relief from the burden of armaments. The Socialists of Germany, through their leader, Herr Liebknecht, had, in 1913, disclosed the powerful grip of the Krupp and allied firms on the German State and the Emperor himself, who was understood to be a shareholder. The similar revelations made in Great Britain did not involve the Court, but the folly of expenditure on weapons of destruction had been reduced to economic terms by Mr. Norman Angell. The wealth of Mr. Carnegie had endowed the Palace of Peace at The Hague and was further devoted to investigation and propaganda. In

Germany a state trial of exceptional significance was pending. Rosa Luxemburg, the Socialist leader, was charged with making "defamatory accusations of brutality against officers and non-commissioned officers" of the German Army. The alleged brutality was committed, not against the citizens of Liége or Louvain, who were still happily unconscious of the fate reserved for them by Germanic culture, but against German subjects themselves. A thousand witnesses were in readiness to vouch for the alleged acts. A hearing was set down for the 4th of July. By request of the Prussian Minister for War it was suspended, *sine die*, in order that rebutting evidence might be collected. Before that case, which all Germany was watching, could again be mentioned, war had obliterated the tracks. Rosa Luxemburg was not the only defendant. There was Machlewski, another Socialist, who was to suffer three months' imprisonment for writing, as a comment on the Zabern affair, that "soldiers are systematically educated in brutality." His article appeared in a Königsberg newspaper, and, before his sentence expired, Königsberg was threatened with investment by the Russians. Then, again, there was Hansi, the Alsatian caricaturist, who was to receive a year's imprisonment for dedicating his book, *Mon Village*, to "those who never forget." "When," wrote he, "cheers are called for the Kaiser, the children of Alsace only pretend to join in. Those cheers are like the howls of beasts of prey." He fled to France

six weeks before the French soldiers kissed the soil of the Alsatian province, and Paris removed the crêpe from the statue of Strassburg in the Place de la Concorde.

Amid the innumerable fragments of gossip, true or apocryphal, which filled the newspapers during the war, was a remark by a German prisoner that will be historic. "This," said he, "is an officers' war." If, in the days preceding the Austrian Note, there had been clamour for bloodshed, it would have been reflected in the press. Of such clamour there was none. Austro-Hungarians loudly demanded that full satisfaction be required of Serbia, but they did not ask for war. Neither in the Dual Monarchy nor anywhere else was there an agitation so violent as to overcome the pacific intentions of a Government desirous of peace. No statesman indulged in the appeals to bellicose sentiment which were attributed to Mr. Chamberlain in the critical weeks before the war in South Africa. When the blow fell, every hall in Berlin was crowded with working men, bent upon a protest that was futile, and an English labour leader wrote that the Socialists in the Fatherland would veto the designs of the Emperor. A vast crowd gathered in Trafalgar Square to demand peace. "Small but powerful cliques," cried the advocates of neutrality, are rushing the country into war; therefore, "destroy the Plot." The responsibility for the war rests solely and for ever on the ruling caste in Europe. When the great decisions were

taken, the peoples, so intimately concerned, knew nothing and therefore realised nothing of what was going on, ostensibly in their name, yet in reality behind their backs. The diplomatic and military system was still a secret, remote from popular control and apart from democratic sentiment. Even in Great Britain the Foreign Office, which could only exist as an integral factor in an international hierarchy, maintained its character as a close corporation, reserved strictly for birth and wealth. Not less was this the case in Germany, where the popular uprising of 1848 had failed to reach its goal. The peoples were, therefore, powerless to prevent the war. They were severally manœuvred into it. Even the financiers were contemptuously overridden. All that can be said of the ordinary men and women who lived their lawful lives in Europe is that they could not escape the devouring scourge, which a higher wisdom, a profounder sagacity than their own, inflicted on them. The philosophers have enlarged upon the risks to humanity which are involved in the adoption of elective institutions. The wars of 1914 illustrate the security which humanity enjoyed with the other blessings of a bureaucratic regime.



## CHAPTER II

### THE CRIME OF SARAJEVO

AMONG the decencies of unreformed diplomacy is the rule that, if possible, some pretext should be found for any war which it may be desired to spring upon humanity. The naval festivities at Kiel were rudely interrupted by a cruel and mysterious crime which proved to be precisely the incident required. Sarajevo, where occurred this convenient tragedy, is a leading city in the provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina which in 1908 Austria-Hungary formally annexed to herself. The provinces were, like Piedmont, uncomfortable under Austrian rule, being allied by race and sympathy with the Serbs. The Archduke Franz Ferdinand, who arranged the annexation, had during the Balkan War stoutly resisted Serbia's reasonable demand for a commercial outlet on the Adriatic. Like his morganatic wife, the Duchess of Hohenberg, he was a devout Catholic of the Roman faith, and an opponent of the Eastern Church, to which millions of Austrian subjects belonged. His one purpose in life was to resist by Army and Navy the natural aspirations of the

Slavs. In the intrigues which produced the second and bloodier Balkan War, the Archduke was a ringleader, and his zeal led the Emperor William on one occasion to remark, "My friend, it is with *my* sword that you are doing so much rattling." This was the man who, with his consort, fell a victim at Sarajevo to the assassin's bullet.

It was known that Sarajevo was a hotbed of political agitation. Apparently the Archduke was warned of danger by Count Tisza, the Hungarian Prime Minister, and other responsible persons. But he insisted on attending the manœuvres which were to be held in Bosnia, and his wife, fearing the worst, remained at his side. For some inscrutable reason, the usual protection of the police, which is accorded in Europe to all august personages, was on this occasion of especial peril withdrawn by the authorities. The official excuse was that the function was military, and that the civil safeguards could be dispensed with. The conspirators were thus left free to make sure of their victims, and the miscreants easily tracked down their prey. On their way to the Town Hall the illustrious couple narrowly escaped annihilation by a bomb—a missile from one Cabrinovic, a printer. On the return drive their chauffeur unfortunately mistook his route, and had to reverse the car just where a wretched youth named Princip, of whom, it is alleged, Austria had been warned by the Serbian police, was stationed with a Browning pistol. He hesitated at the sight of

the Duchess, hardened his heart, shot the heir to the Dual Monarchy and the unhappy lady at his side.

A wave of horror swept over Europe. The German Emperor returned post-haste to Berlin and prepared to attend the funeral. Prince Arthur of Connaught was to represent King George, who instituted the customary Court mourning. In both Houses of Parliament there were motions of condolence, which were the more sincere because the Archduke and his wife had visited England as recently as the previous November, and had won a liberal measure of regard. In no quarter was there any expression of sympathy with the Serbian conspirators. Men recalled the ruthless massacre of the last Obrenovich and of Draga, his Queen. What did astonish the world was the cool philosophy of the Viennese Court. The people themselves did a little rioting around the Serbian Legation, where an unpopular flag was flying at half-mast. But the obsequies accorded to the Archduke were of so perfunctory a character that 150 nobles, the most exclusive in the land, walked in a procession of their own as a protest. The Kaiser was informed that the aged Emperor could not stand the strain of receiving august visitors, and when the bodies were entrained for their last journey to Artstetten, on the Danube, the muffled roll of drums mingled with the whistles of locomotives, which continued to deposit passenger trains and even to shunt goods trucks, as if no special ceremony were proceeding.

So passed to their rest the Archduke with his sword and his jewelled coronets, and she whom as Countess Chotek he had loved, distinguished only by her simple and womanly regalia, a black fan and a pair of white gloves. As the cortège paused at the station, a restaurant, brilliantly lighted, continued business as usual.

Suspicion fell at once upon Serbia. A few days before the crime, King Peter, displaying great anxiety for a prolonged cure at the baths of Vranja, had handed over the government of his "beloved people" to the Crown Prince. "I recommend," said he, "my dear Fatherland to the care of the Almighty." It was alleged that the assassins wore Serbian tricolours in their buttonholes, and that the news of their grim exploit reached Buda Pesth by way of Belgrade. The crime was certainly calculated to throw Austria-Hungary into confusion. The Emperor was aged and infirm. The new heir to the Dual Throne was a young Archduke of twenty-seven years, Karl Franz, who was without experience of statesmanship. His wife was a Bourbon, Princess Zita of Parma, who had been educated at Ryde in the Isle of Wight, and was married when a girl in her teens. These amiable young people, with their two babes, were suddenly confronted with the tremendous problems of the Dual Monarchy. The future was compromised by the dynastic perplexities, inevitably arising out of the late Archduke's morganatic marriage. By the law of Hungary, the Duchess could be

Queen at Buda Pesth and her children could succeed. There were authorities who held that no renunciation by the parents was valid as cancelling the inalienable rights of children, then unborn. The settlement was as full of pitfalls as was the Pragmatic Sanction under which the Empress Maria Theresa succeeded to a trembling throne. And in one case, as in the other, the situation was of supreme interest to Prussia. From Maria Theresa, Frederick the Great wrung Silesia. The eyes of the Emperor William were directed to Vienna and, beyond Vienna, to Salonica and the middle east. Bismarck had said that there was no room in one German Empire for Hohenzollerns and Hapsburgs. He fought Sadowa for the exclusion of Austria. With the murder of the Archduke, following as it did upon other tragedies of that ill-fated house, the Hapsburgs had almost disappeared. The pear was almost ripe. After two months of war, the armies of Austria-Hungary, defeated under their own generals, accepted the unchallenged command of Prussia, and soldiers swore fealty to two Emperors instead of one.

Cabrinovic and Princip, the assassins, with their accomplices, were put on trial before a Court at Sarajevo. Their personal guilt was obvious, and the only question of substance was the alleged complicity of Serbia. On this matter, no public inquiry was either held or demanded by Austria. There was no attempt to establish an authoritative judicial commission, similar to that which in 1888

adjudicated in London on the outrages of Fenianism. Even in Germany the attitude of Vienna was criticised. According to the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, the Austrian Foreign Office falsely announced that Serbia had been invited (and by assumption had declined) to inquire into the assassinations. The journal protested against Germany subscribing to "a blank power of attorney in favour of the Vienna Government." "The wisdom of Viennese policy," wrote the editor, "is by no means above suspicion." The allegations, enumerated in the annex to the Serbian Note, are based not upon judicial findings, but upon depositions by the murderers themselves. The plot, so ran the indictment, was hatched in Belgrade. The bombs were hand-grenades coming from the Serbian arms dépôt at Kragujevac. And Serbian officials on the frontier connived at the smuggling of this dangerous contraband. The assassinations were perpetrated on the 27th of June. This was the case, the only case presented on the 24th of July. It justified serious representations to Belgrade. Such representations would have received and, indeed, did receive, the support of Europe, including Russia. But the crime at Sarajevo did not justify a proposal to destroy Serbia as an independent state. Still less did it justify the imperilment of the general peace of Europe. It was only in the month of October, after ten weeks of disastrous conflagration, that the public trial was opened at Sarajevo, so speedy was the justice inflicted on Louvain, so tardy the retribution where the victim

of real or alleged firing was, not a Prussian soldier, but an Austrian Prince of the Blood.

The attitude of Berlin appeared to be simple and correct. The matter, it was argued, is one for Austria-Hungary and Serbia to settle between themselves, without a third Power intervening. The Emperor William was able, therefore, to proceed northwards on his yacht as if he had divested himself entirely of all responsibility for the negotiations which were to be begun between Vienna and Belgrade. No one knew that on the 10th of July a Prussian General had been reprimanded for failing to report himself for prospective war, or that, weeks before Sarajevo, German cruisers, stationed at distant ports, had been furnished with secret orders for coaling. There was even a suggestion that the terms of the forthcoming Austrian Note were unknown to the Ally in shining armour who might be called upon to make them good. The "scope" of the *démarche* had been communicated, but not "the tone." The detachment of the Emperor William was the more plausible because it was believed that, while always ready to make full diplomatic use of his military prestige, he was against war. Like the second King of Prussia, he loved his Potsdam Guards too well to lose them in battle. When the die was cast, and a great crowd stood cheering before his Palace, the Emperor declared, "This is a dark hour for Germany. The sword is *being forced* into her hands." In due course, we will examine into the truth of that statement, but in the meantime it may be re-

marked that the recreations of the Hohenzollerns have not always been accompanied by political and military inaction. The pleasant festivities at Rheinsberg were the cloak under which Frederick the Great moved his troops into Silesia. The war of 1870 broke out while the King of Prussia and Bismarck, with the unfortunate French Ambassador, Benedetti, were placidly drinking the waters at Ems. And, on this third occasion, it was remarkable that the diplomatic note of which the Kaiser professed ignorance, should have been communicated in advance to the subordinate Government of Bavaria, where foreknowledge of its terms was officially admitted.

The Crown Prince was more candid than his father. He did not hesitate to make it clear that, pretext or no pretext, Germany intended to have her war, at an early and convenient moment. When a certain obscure Lieutenant-Colonel Frobenius wrote a pamphlet, entitled *Germany's Hour of Fate*, the Crown Prince telegraphed his enthusiastic endorsement. The effusion was published a week before the Austrian Note, and the hour of fate was to fall in the spring of 1915, one year before Russia had completed her strategic railways and other preparations. Some months before the crisis, the Minister President of Bavaria had solemnly warned Prussia that she must desist from imposing further military burdens on the Empire. When an obscure professor in Poland ridiculed this warning, he also was rewarded with an approving message from the Crown Prince.

Aided by a Princess whom London, at the Coronation, found to be irresistible, the future ruler of Germany made himself infinitely popular among his Junker friends. He behaved as a vivacious and irresponsible young man. And there was no secret about his view of Great Britain. When touring through India, he remarked, "I admire English ways and I adore English women, but I dislike England." In him was summed up the jealousy of our Empire and the detestation of our freedom which permeated the Prussian aristocracy. The British Constitution was, by its very continuance, an encouragement to the German socialism which was abhorred in the palaces, though not in the polling booths, of Potsdam. We can best appreciate the influence of the Crown Prince by asking ourselves what sensation would have been created in our own country if King George V. had, as heir to the throne, openly backed the writings of Mr. Leo Maxse. From the days of Henry V. to the days of the Kaiser himself, eldest sons of monarchs have, on ascending their thrones, lived down their boyish extravagances. The Crown Prince of Prussia mingled dragons' teeth with his wild oats, and in the reaping of his harvest the sword swept like a sickle over the fairest lands of Christendom.

During those weeks of meditation which intervened between the assassinations and the *démarche* to Serbia, Austria-Hungary imitated the admirable calm of Germany. She refrained from disclosing to Europe a hint of the dreadful calamities which

she was preparing to spring upon mankind. Her diplomacy was manifestly designed to steal a march on all peacemakers, whether they be diplomatists like Sir Edward Grey or great financial interests which would be wrecked by war. On the 7th of July it was officially stated that a joint meeting of the Cabinets of Austria and Hungary was solely concerned with domestic measures to repress the Pan-Serb propaganda in Bosnia. On the 8th of July Count Tisza assured the Hungarian Parliament that the situation in Bosnia was not undermined ; there was no revolution, only a dangerous agitation. A week later his language was, perhaps, a little firmer. "Our relations with Serbia," said he, "must be cleared up." He added that "every State and nation must be able and willing to make war if it wishes to continue as a State and nation." At this interesting moment the Russian Minister at Belgrade, M. Hartwig, suddenly died and was buried in that city. The Czar took the opportunity of telegraphing :

"I note with gratitude that the great son of the Russian People and sincere friend of the Serbian nation will rest in the fraternal soil of Serbia."

It was an intimation to Vienna that the soil of Serbia was not regarded at St. Petersburg with indifference. There must be limits to the Kaiser's theory that the fate of the Balkans only concerned Austria-Hungary and Serbia. M. Pasitch, the Serbian Prime Minister, was emboldened to assert

that, while he hoped for ten years of peace, he could not allow his country to be branded as “a nation of murderers.”

There were other warnings, equally plain to those in Berlin whose business it was to interpret such intimations. On Monday, the 20th of July, three days before the note was presented, the Czar received President Poincaré and M. Viviani, the French Prime Minister, at Cronstadt. Amid the customary junketings “it was agreed that a harmonious line of action of the two countries in their general European policy should be established.” The conversations were prolonged, and when they were over the President hurried back to Paris, without stopping to call upon his good neighbour, the King of Denmark. It might have been seen at Berlin that Great Britain was watchful. A hint of Germany’s intentions had undoubtedly reached London—it was said, by way of Rome. Why did the Opposition, on the advice of Mr. Austen Chamberlain, so quietly accept the most drastic Budget of modern times? For what reason was it determined that the King should inspect so vast a gathering of warships in the Solent? What precisely did Mr. Lloyd George intend to convey to the Bankers when he referred to some great crisis in view of which all dissensions, whether of Labour or of Ireland, must be hushed? What was the unpublished reference to foreign affairs which the King included in his speech to the Home Rule Conference that met so dramatically at Buckingham Palace? Why did

the Cabinet assemble so frequently and sit so long ? Was it merely that Mr. Churchill was creating difficulties over Tyrone ? Lord Kitchener happened to be in London, an Earl by now, with special, very special and unusual, remainder to his brothers. More than once his martial presence was recognised in Downing Street. Germany, polishing up her plans for invading France through Belgium, had every reason to know that Great Britain, while attributing to her no such evil design, was watching anxiously.

Week after week the diplomats in Vienna and Berlin seemed to hesitate. Should they or should they not so handle the Serbian affair as to hazard all, their countries and their crowns, on the final arbitrament of war ? They looked abroad and calculated. There was St. Petersburg, in the throes of a long contemplated strike, for contributing to the funds of which a wealthy German resident was arrested. There was Paris, hysterical over the trial of Madame Caillaux. There was London—her Conference breaking down—in trouble over Ulster ; unable even to deal with militant women. It seemed to be the very moment for imparting Prussian culture to a grateful Europe. “Let your hearts beat to God, your fists to the Enemy”—this was the quotation from Prince Friedrich Karl, which Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg, the Chancellor, had on the tip of his tongue. He did not foresee that, at the hint of war, all other embarrassments would vanish, Protestants and Catholics of Ireland

would, despite past eloquence, unite against Prussia. The strikers of St. Petersburg would flock back to their factories, and from their factories to the frontier. The Suffragettes, released by Royal Prerogative, would hold meetings in support of the Prime Minister. Madame Caillaux would be promptly acquitted of murdering the editor, M. Calmette, whom undoubtedly she slew. This, we say, was not foreseen.

At the critical moment there were disclosures in Paris. M. Charles Humbert, Senator for the department which bears the name of that ominous river, the Meuse, rose in his place and declared that the forts were defective in structure, that the guns lacked ammunition, that there was no provision against attacks from the air, that wireless communication between fort and fort became useless when the Germans worked their station at Metz, and that, if war were to break out, the Army would be short of 2,000,000 pairs of boots. There would be one reserve boot only in each knapsack, and this boot would be thirty years old. The allegations threw France into panic. The aged M. Clemenceau did not remember, since 1870, so great a disaster. The House devoted the National Fête Day to a consideration of the business.

The Minister for War reported that at the end of 1915 France would have 3020 pieces of artillery to Germany's 3370. By that date also, the quantity of projectiles would be three times what it was in 1908. At the end of the month there

would be experiments in heavy howitzers. In 1915 a sum of 6 million francs would be spent upon relief boots. The programme laid down in 1911 would be carried out by 1918. There might be deficiencies in material, but these would be rectified. Fresh bridge material would be created this year. The forts on the Haute Meuse were indeed thirty years old, but they were no longer important. It was a statement, damning in two ways. Against France, it indicated that something was amiss in the public service. Against Germany, it was clear proof that, war or no war, her smaller neighbour, already confronted by deficits of 60 millions sterling, was being driven from peaceful avocations into militarism and ruin, Germany had the howitzers, the forts, the wireless, the boots—all ready for instant war. In August and September she walked through the fortified places of the Haute Meuse as if they were not. She did not wait until France had completed her programme of 1911. She did not even wait until, by the end of the month, France had begun those experiments in heaviest artillery which Germany had on her side quietly completed months, possibly years, before. For Germany it was clearly the hour, and she struck home.

Some months later, her Official War Book was translated into English by Professor Morgan. "International law," so we read in this German code of conduct, "is in no way opposed to the exploitation of the crimes of third parties (*assassination, incendiarism, robbery, and the like*) to the

detriment of the enemy." The principles, thus frankly avowed, were as frankly applied to the entire drama, full as it is of unexplained circumstances, in which the Archduke and his consort were treated as useful but quite subordinate characters whose sudden removal was of material assistance to German aims.

## CHAPTER III

### THE WHITE PAPERS

SOME attempt must now be made to apportion responsibility for the miseries which so suddenly overwhelmed Europe. Addressing a meeting in the London Guildhall, Mr. Asquith solemnly declared that Germany alone had broken the peace. The Emperor William on his side appealed to the Deity, and was passionately supported in his contention by professors and divines of the Lutheran persuasion, whose denunciation of England and even of the citizens of smoking, bloodstained Louvain was signed by the illustrious hand of Harnack. Not the least melancholy of the incidents which preceded the war was the manifesto of British scholars and British scientists, who from their venerable seats of learning at Oxford and Cambridge hailed Germany as “a nation leading the way in the arts and sciences”—war against whom, “in the interests of Serbia and Russia,” would be “a crime against civilisation.” “The alliance between the revolutionary Government of France,” so wrote Mr. Bernard Shaw, “and the reactionary Government of Russia is a

monstrous and unnatural product of cosmopolitan finance."

It was Germany herself that shattered these tributes to her position in Europe. Side by side with the popular magazines of the month there appeared on the bookstalls a different publication, prosaically entitled the White Papers—otherwise "Miscellaneous No. 6 (1914) Correspondence respecting the European Crisis"—which set forth, without note or comment, the 158 dispatches received by or sent from the British Foreign Office. Wherever these documents were available for public perusal, there was only one opinion of the momentous controversy. Sweden and Turkey might dread the advance of Russia, Holland might shiver in silence amid the crash of war, but, elsewhere, Germany and her unhappy Ally were isolated. There was no special endeavour by Great Britain to influence the United States and the self-governing Dominions. On the contrary, at a critical moment the Cable Censor actually withheld from the world the speeches of Sir Edward Grey and Mr. Asquith, and only allowed them to be communicated to English-speaking nations beyond the seas, four days late and in a mutilated form. Six weeks after the war had been in progress, the American press complained that the news of British victories was suppressed on the way to the United States, and that other news was wilfully garbled. Yet, despite this curious neglect, very tardily remedied, American opinion did not waver. The efforts of

Count Bernstorff at Washington, though skilfully aided by Herr Dernburg and by German finance, availed nothing. Indeed, the Ambassador's suggestion that, since Canada was sending troops to Europe, Germany might have to send troops to Canada, only drew the sarcastic question whether the Emperor William intended to serve New England as he had served Belgium. The American Press made it plain that the Monroe Doctrine would be laid down at Washington, and not at Berlin.

We must now mention a Minister whose words will be quoted, whose policy will be analysed, as long as history remains among the arts. "Edward Grey," said Mr. Gladstone, of his young under-secretary, "*there you have the Parliamentary manner.*" When the Liberal Government was formed in 1905, *The Times* gleefully announced that Grey had declined the Foreign Office. At the hour when that august newspaper went to press the statement was true, and it was only after a long vigil with his friend, Mr. Arthur Acland, that Sir Edward Grey decided to risk association with the Radicals. When the great war broke out, he had for ten years guided the external destinies of the British Empire. In experience and prestige he ranked with Canning, with Palmerston, and the late Lord Salisbury. At the first serious hint of trouble with Germany the newspaper which had welcomed his hesitancy in 1905 declared that, despite Radicalism and the Parliament Act, he had become indispensable.

His task was never easy. At the outset he was confronted with a House of Commons composed for the most part of new members who suspected Liberal Imperialism and were indifferent to whips. They were zealous for the Macedonians. They resented what seemed to be a sacrifice of distracted Persia to the Anglo-Russian Agreement, and they detested a special friendship with a bureaucracy which oppressed the Finns, the Poles, the Jews, and the intellectuals. Sir Edward Grey always mastered his critics. His speech was simple and homely, but calm, cautious, and dignified. His voice was musical and sympathetic. No violence ever offended him. He was respectful to sincerity and sedulously courteous to men of humble social station. The lonely eminence of his character was emphasised by the tragic sorrow which left him, at the zenith of his career, without a partner to share his life and his home. Always an athlete and a sportsman, he found solace in nature. His chief friends were his squirrels ; he meditated long over his fishing-rod. This was the man on whom, as peacekeeper of Europe, the Garter was bestowed by a grateful Sovereign. As a commoner, he received the decoration which is coveted by emperors and princes. Yet he was a commoner only in name. By ancestry and outlook he belonged to the governing class. It is accurate to call him the last of the great Whigs.

Sir Edward Grey continued the policy of Lord Lansdowne, and was assisted in his department by Lord Lansdowne's brother, well known as Lord

Edmund FitzMaurice. He thus inherited the Japanese Alliance and the French Entente. Both these special friendships were disliked by Germany. The rise of Japan nipped in the bud the attempt of the Emperor William to establish an Empire on Chinese soil. The histrionic crusade to Kiao-Chou was rendered as futile as the previous intervention in Venezuela. Graver still were the consequences of the understanding with France, against which at the time Lord Rosebery entered a far-seeing *caveat*. It was not merely that causes of friction between Great Britain and her neighbour were to be smoothed away. It was not merely that King Edward was to receive in Paris that personal welcome which was in a marked degree less cordial on the rare occasions when, as an official duty, he visited Berlin and his somewhat exacting nephew. The Entente embodied a bargain. England was to be secure in Egypt on condition that France had a free hand in Morocco. England was to be an indirect party, not to the security of France alone, but also to the aggrandisement of her Empire.

The feelings of Germany can best be read in the outspoken and verbose pages of Bernhardi. The pamphleteer wrote :

“It must be admitted with mortification and envy that the nation vanquished in 1870, whose vital powers seemed exhausted, which possessed no qualification for colonisation from want of men to colonise, as is best seen in Algeria, has yet created the second largest colonial Empire in the world, and

prides herself on being a World Power, while the conqueror of Gravelotte and Sedan, in this respect, lags far behind her, and only recently, in the Morocco controversy, yielded to the unjustifiable pretensions of France in a way which, according to universal popular sentiment, was unworthy alike of the dignity and the interests of Germany."

On that disclosure of the Prussian mind much might be written. It was, after all, Bismarek who himself tolerated and even encouraged the extension of the French Colonies. Bernhardi did not grasp the secret of imperial responsibility to subject races. Empire, as it is called, is not conquest. It is not colonisation. Conquest and colonisation are merely the accidents of Empire, and the thing itself, whether it be displayed in India, in Egypt, or in Algiers, is, in name alone, rule ; in reality, service.

In strict law, Great Britain incurred no liability over Morocco. All that she promised was to refrain from interference with France. But when the daring diplomacy of Delcassé aroused Berlin, when the Algeciras Conference was called, and Bülow was created a Prince as reward for Delcassé's dismissal, Sir Edward Grey had good reason to know that the Entente was a two-edged weapon. He held that public opinion would not allow France to be struck down as the result of an undertaking with this country. And, in 1906, during a general election, an inner cabinet, which included Mr. Asquith and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, authorised naval and military con-

versations between the two Powers. Although there was no pledge to support France against Germany, the ground was carefully surveyed.

The Germans, at Brussels, discovered documentary evidence that Belgium was included in these discussions. They drew the conclusion that Great Britain intended to make of Belgium a base for invading the Fatherland. The true inference was, however, obvious. The Anglo-Belgic Conferences merely meant that in 1906, as in 1870 and 1914, England was ready to defend her guarantee to Belgium. Lord Haldane, whose knowledge of Germany was profound, reorganised the Army on the lines of a completely equipped Expeditionary Force. It was not in terms or in fact directed against any particular power. Lord Haldane himself would hint that Egypt might require protection against the Turk. In any case, the reform of the War Office, unsuccessfully attempted by Mr. Brodrick and Mr. Arnold Forster, was so long overdue as to be the despair of statesmen, and something had to be done to cut up the red tape.

The Algeciras Conference arrived at a peaceful accommodation, and it was not until much later that the Cabinet heard officially of the military and naval conversations. In Parliament it was denied repeatedly, and to the last, that the Entente contained any undisclosed obligation. The position was placed beyond doubt by a letter from Sir Edward Grey to M. Cambon, the French Ambassador in London, written under date the 22nd

of November 1912, seven years after the conversations had been instituted. According to this document, “such consultation does not restrict the freedom of either Government to decide at any future time whether or not to assist the other by armed force.” It is added :

“The disposition, for instance, of the French and British Fleets respectively at the present moment is not based upon an engagement to co-operate in war.”

It will always be arguable that on so important a matter as this the whole Cabinet ought to have been consulted and a full statement made to Parliament. On the other hand, such a disclosure might have precipitated the very collision with Germany—might have encouraged the very Chauvinism of France—which was deprecated by British policy. England and France were not alone in conducting military conversations. Within the Triple Alliance there was a perfect understanding on questions of strategy. And, as Mr. Asquith informed a public meeting, Great Britain did, in that year 1912, hand to Germany a Cabinet Declaration, not indeed that she would under all circumstances abstain from war, but that she would under no circumstances countenance an attack on Germany.

In the six years that intervened between the crisis of 1905 and the crisis of 1911 there was an adjustment of the balance of Power. France, smarting under the loss of Delcassé, reorganised



her Army. Russia, slowly recovered from the effects of her failures in the Far East. Germany, incensed at her rebuff in Morocco, built a great Navy. In the meantime Sir Charles Hardinge assisted Sir Edward Grey in the task of adjusting Anglo-Russian relations along the entire range of actual or potential frontier which begins at Persia and ends in Tibet. The friendship between France and Great Britain thus developed into the Triple Entente, a development which could not be pleasing to Germany in her ambitious and unsatisfied mood. It reduced the Asiatic embarrassments of her formidable eastern neighbour. It crushed her hopes of finding consolation and territory in Persia. It did not help her in Mesopotamia. Worst of all, from Germany's standpoint, it consolidated the *status quo* in Europe, and when, in 1911, the *Panther* steamed into Agadir, Germany refrained from incurring the indefinite risks of a direct attack upon France, with Great Britain intervening. She found consolation in the uninviting regions of the French Congo.

The group system in Europe was thus definitely crystallised. The uncertain elements within that system were Italy on the one hand and Great Britain on the other. During the prolonged troubles in the Balkans, the system, thanks to the co-operation of London and Berlin, almost mellowed into a Concert of Europe. Sir Edward Grey presided over meetings of ambassadors, and the Foreign Office in Downing Street became the

diplomatic clearing-house of the world. He desired a balance of power in Europe. The sagacity which led Queen Elizabeth to oppose the hegemony of Spain, and William III. to oppose the hegemony of France, inspired Sir Edward Grey when, following the same tradition, he resisted the hegemony of Prussia. Excepting only the recognition of French enterprise in Morocco, it was, from first to last, a struggle by England for the *status quo*. Indeed, Great Britain had assisted Germany in her useful desire to open up the Middle East by means of what was popularly called the Bagdad Railway.

This, then, was the position of affairs when the narrative, embodied in the White Papers, begins. The story is, in the main, simple enough. On the 20th of July, the Monday before the Austrian Note, Sir Edward Grey consulted the German Ambassador, who "regarded the situation as very uncomfortable." So far from denying that Austria-Hungary had a case against Serbia, the Foreign Secretary urged that the results of the trial should be disclosed so as to make it easier for Russia to counsel moderation in Belgrade. This suggestion was favourably considered, for a few days later the dossier in question was offered for inspection to the Powers, but under a time limit of forty-eight hours, indeed less, which rendered the privilege useless as an assistance to peace. However, the Ambassador associated himself with Sir Edward Grey's "detestation" of a war in Europe over Serbia.

On the 23rd, Count Mensdorff broke to Sir Edward Grey the fatal news that, by the inclusion of this time limit, the so-called Austrian Note had been transformed into an Ultimatum. In the subsequent negotiations there was an endeavour to explain away the blunt fact by suggesting that the period of grace would be followed, not by war itself, but by preparations for war. It is enough to state that the period expired at six o'clock on the 25th, and that, within half an hour, the Austrian Legation at Belgrade was empty. Indeed, the case is worse than this. The Minister left the city with the Serbian reply in his pocket, a reply which accepted his demands in almost every particular. It was no wonder that in his conversation with Count Mensdorff, Sir Edward Grey dwelt upon "the awful consequences involved in the situation." He thus reports this momentous warning :

"If as many as four Great Powers of Europe —let us say Austria, France, Russia, and Germany—were engaged in war, it seemed to me that it would involve the expenditure of so vast a sum of money, and such an interference with trade, that a war would be accompanied or followed by a complete collapse of European credit and industry. In these days, in great industrial states, this would mean a state of things worse than that of 1848, and irrespective of who were victors in the war, many things might be swept away."

These were the words of a statesman, after-

wards "branded," in a Hamburg journal, "as a demigod of lies"—a man guilty of "unworthy, infinitely shameful trickiness."

The warning passed unheeded. Austria-Hungary may have regarded war as the only alternative to disintegration. Berlin may have regarded it as the best preventive of a constitutional movement. In any event, the date of the Ultimatum and the time limit were so arranged as to decide the issue while the French President and his Government were actually on the high seas, voyaging back to Paris. The Elysée was unoccupied, and preparations for the defence of France were, for the moment, retarded. There was, too, another circumstance. Marshall Putnik, the Commander of the Serbian Army, was undergoing a cure at Gleichenberg in Styria. On hurrying back to his post of duty he was arrested at Buda Pesth. The outrage was, perhaps, too flagrant to be defended, even by Austria, and, claiming full credit for her generosity, she released the distinguished prisoner who had been her unsuspecting guest.

The German Ambassador assured Sir Edward Grey that his Government knew nothing beforehand of the Austrian terms. A charitable explanation of this statement is that in Berlin there are three authorities in nominal control of Foreign Affairs. The Secretary of State may be overruled by the Chancellor, and the Chancellor himself can only speak subject to the will of the Emperor. Sir M. de Bunsen, the British Am-

bassador at Vienna, entertained no doubt about the real facts :

“ Although I am not able to verify it, I have private information that the German Ambassador (at Vienna) knew the text of the Austrian Ultimatum to Serbia before it was dispatched, and telegraphed it to the German Emperor. I know from the German Ambassador himself that he (presumably the Emperor) endorses every line of it.”

The German Government was ignorant of the Ultimatum, and therefore innocent of responsibility. But the German Emperor “knew the text,” and in any case “endorsed every line of it.” We may leave it at that—only repeating that the terms of the Note were admittedly known to the Bavarian Government, which is subordinate to Prussia.

The Ultimatum was preceded by no earlier negotiations. It could not be said that Serbia had been refractory, because nothing had been asked of Serbia. Yet when Russia applied to Vienna for an extension of time, the answer was a polite yet instant refusal. When Sir Edward Grey obtained from Russia, France, and Italy their consent to mediation by the four disinterested Powers, which included Germany, the response from Berlin and Vienna was again evasive and dilatory. Yet, at The Hague, Germany had pledged herself to support precisely such friendly offices. Direct conversations between Vienna and

St. Petersburg proved equally unavailing. As for the representations which Germany undertook to make to Austria-Hungary, Sir M. de Bunsen wrote :

“ The French Ambassador (at Vienna) hears from Berlin that the German Ambassador at Vienna is instructed to speak seriously to the Austro-Hungarian Government against acting in a manner calculated to provoke a European war. Unfortunately the German Ambassador (at Vienna) is himself so identified with extreme anti-Russian and anti-Serbian feeling prevalent in Vienna that he is unlikely to plead the cause of peace with entire sincerity.”

Telegrams between King George, the Czar, and the Emperor William raised momentary hopes, but resulted in nothing, save charges and counter-charges over mobilisation, which was, in fact, proceeding, with more or less rapidity, all over Europe, including neutral countries, like Holland, Switzerland, and Italy.

Among the diplomatic representatives of Germany there were doubtless men of caution and humanity who, like Prince Lichnowsky in London, honestly desired to avert the impending calamity. Not the least dramatic touch in the White Papers is the following from Sir George Buchanan, the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg :

“ German Ambassador (at St. Petersburg) had a second interview with Minister for Foreign Affairs at 2 a.m., *when former completely broke down on seeing that war was inevitable.* He appealed to M. Sazonoff (the Russian Minister) to make some

suggestion which he could telegraph to German Government as last hope. M. Sazonoff accordingly drew up and handed to German Ambassador a formula in French, of which following is translation :—

“ ‘ If Austria, recognising that her conflict with Servia has assumed character of question of European interest, declares herself ready to eliminate from her ultimatum points which violate principle of Sovereignty in Serbia, Russia engages to stop all military preparations.’ ”

To this golden bridge, dated a week after the Ultimatum, Berlin did not supply the keystone, and, like the rest, it collapsed under the tread of armed millions. Serbia had already accepted all the counts in the Ultimatum save those which violated her sovereignty. She had formally condemned the Pan-Serb propaganda. She had agreed to publish this condemnation in the *Official Journal* and as an Army Order. She had undertaken to proceed with the utmost rigour against all who might be guilty of such machinations. All publications which incite to hatred and contempt of the Dual Monarchy were to be suppressed. The *Narodna Obrana*, or National Society, was to be dissolved and its funds confiscated. Teachers in schools were to be dismissed for fomenting ill-feeling against Austria-Hungary, and, on the delicate question of the Dual Monarchy naming what officers should be cashiered, Serbia, with an Army at her back of 400,000 men, an Army recently victorious over Turkey and over Bulgaria, proposed arbitration. She also proposed that Austria’s

demand to share jurisdiction over her courts in political matters should be similarly adjudicated. These were the concessions which Vienna declined even to discuss, and which an official German pamphlet described as "entirely a play for time."

We need not consider the hypothetical question, What would have been the action of Austria-Hungary if Serbia had accepted her Ultimatum, without the alteration of a comma? In certain quarters it was believed that, as guarantee for the fulfilment of the acceptance, Austria would have then demanded the occupation of Belgrade. In any case, the presence of foreign and hostile officials in Serbia, exercising judicial and quasi-military powers, would have caused, if not a revolution, at least disturbances and causes of embitterment. Whichever way we regard it, whether as accepted or as rejected, the Ultimatum was calculated to plunge Serbia into bloodshed, and, according to the information of the British Embassy at Rome, it was to be followed by the seizure of the railway to Salonica. Russia had wrung from Serbia a humiliating reply to the Austrian demands. Russia was now to stand by while Serbia was devastated by war. Her only comfort was to be a promise, not very precisely defined, that the territories thus deluged with blood would be restored intact to the Serbian Government when all was over.

In his speech to the House of Commons on 3rd August Sir Edward Grey expressed the some-

what naive opinion that Great Britain would suffer as great a loss through the war, whether she intervened or remained neutral. It was the one unfortunate utterance in a great apologia. Viscount Morley and Mr. Burns, who resigned from the Cabinet, were not the only statesmen of eminence who regarded intervention with repugnance. Neutrality would have left Great Britain an unexhausted country amid a Christendom bled white through the wicked folly of its monarchs and statesmen. Germany undoubtedly desired and possibly expected England to remain neutral. But no one who heard the speech will ever forget the passion with which, in the House of Commons, Mr. Asquith dismissed "the strong bid" from Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg—a bid conveyed direct from the Emperor William himself—that was to buy off British hostility. The integrity of the Netherlands, it was said, would be respected. Germany might be forced to enter Belgium, "but when the war was over, Belgian integrity would be respected if she had not sided against Germany." No territory would be taken from France, but this assurance did not extend to French colonies beyond Europe. The answer of Sir Edward Grey was vivid with suppressed indignation :

" His Majesty's Government cannot for a moment entertain the Chancellor's proposal that they should bind themselves to neutrality on such terms.

" What he asks us in effect is to engage to stand by while French colonies are taken and France is

beaten so long as Germany does not take French territory as distinct from the colonies.

"From the material point of view such a proposal is unacceptable, for France, without further territory in Europe being taken from her, could be so crushed as to lose her position as a Great Power, and become subordinate to German policy.

"Altogether, apart from that, it would be a disgrace for us to make this bargain with Germany at the expense of France, a disgrace from which the good name of this country would never recover.

"The Chancellor also in effect asks us to bargain away whatever obligation or interest we have as regards the neutrality of Belgium. We could not entertain that bargain either."

He added that the one basis for Anglo-German friendship was common effort for the peace, and he concluded thus :

"And I will say this : If the peace of Europe can be preserved, and the present crisis safely passed, my own endeavour will be to promote some arrangement to which Germany could be a party, by which she could be assured that no aggressive or hostile policy would be pursued against her or her allies by France, Russia, and ourselves, jointly or separately. I have desired this and worked for it, as far as I could, through the last Balkan crisis, and, Germany having a corresponding object, our relations sensibly improved. The idea has hitherto been too Utopian to form the subject of definite proposals, but if this present crisis, so much more acute than any that Europe has gone through for generations, be safely passed, I am hopeful that the relief and reaction which will follow may make possible some more definite *rapprochement* between the Powers than has been possible hitherto."

It was a great offer, bearing within it the prospect of diminished armaments and international amity. The offer was ignored.

On the next day, the 31st, Sir Edward Grey interviewed the German Ambassador, and thus reports the conversation :

"I said to German Ambassador this morning that if Germany could get any reasonable proposal put forward which made it clear that Germany and Austria were striving to preserve European peace, and that Russia and France would be unreasonable if they rejected it, I would support it at St. Petersburg and Paris, and go the length of saying that if Russia and France would not accept it His Majesty's Government would have nothing more to do with the consequences ; but, otherwise, I told German Ambassador that if France became involved we should be drawn in."

This further approach was useless, and it only remained to inquire of France and Germany whether they intended to respect Belgian neutrality. France gave an unqualified affirmative. President Poincaré had already spoken on the matter with the King of the Belgians. The German Secretary of State asked leave to consult the Emperor and Chancellor before he could possibly answer ; perhaps, said he, there would be no answer, for *it would disclose a part of the German plan of campaign* ; in any case, hostile acts had been committed by Belgium—corn placed under an embargo, for instance—and what reply was France making ?

There was, indeed, a more hopeful rejoinder

from Prince Lichnowsky in London, who inquired if Great Britain would remain neutral provided that Germany respected the neutrality of Belgium. Sir Edward Grey could not undertake that this would be so, but he welcomed the suggestion, as calculated to relieve the tension, only to learn in a few hours that Prince Lichnowsky had spoken without authority, and that the neutrality of Belgium must be pressed on Germany no further. The German case was plain and simple. "We want a clear road," wrote General von Emmich, the Commander who entered the neutral state, "to attack those who wish to attack us." "I shall sweep through Belgium—*thus*," was the remark, accompanied by appropriate gesture, which was credibly attributed to the Kaiser. "France could wait," said Von Bethmann-Hollweg; "we could not wait." The German "must hack his way through."

It was not until October that the Belgian Government, still holding out at Antwerp, published the Grey Book which disclosed its negotiations with Germany. In 1911, also a year of crisis, Germany declined to make a public declaration of her intention to respect Belgian neutrality, because she held that such a declaration would enable France to concentrate her defensive energies on the frontiers which run between Luxembourg and Switzerland. But Belgium was privately assured that the guarantee would hold. We will not comment upon the morality of this attitude, which was designed, first, to embarrass the French in

their preparations to defend Paris; and secondly, to lull King Albert and his people into a false sense of security. In 1914 the German Minister at Brussels did not hesitate during the crisis to associate himself with the private undertaking given to Belgium in 1911. On Sunday, the 2nd of August, he reiterated his protestations. But at five o'clock on that day he presented an ultimatum, by which Germany demanded the right of passage through Belgium, and threatened instant war if it were refused. His reason was that France was dropping bombs on German soil! The Belgian Government, in a dignified reply, confessed to "deep and painful astonishment."

Events moved rapidly. Not only the King of the Belgians but also the youthful and unprotected Grand Duchess of Luxembourg appealed to England for assistance against the German invader. The Cabinet ruled, as Gladstone ruled in 1870, that while Luxembourg was hardly our concern, we could not allow Belgium to be overrun. To "stand by and witness the perpetration of the direst crime that ever stained the pages of history" would be, according to that great authority, to "become participators in the sin." On the 3rd of August a twelve hours' ultimatum was presented to Germany. It expired at midnight. On the 4th of August the British Empire was at war.

The wrath of the Emperor William bordered on hysteria. He dispatched his aide-de-camp to Sir Edward Goschen, the British Ambassador, and angrily resigned his high commissions in the

British Army and Navy. A suggestion in the House of Commons that enemy decorations should be dropped in Great Britain was quietly quashed by the Prime Minister. As for Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg, he so far forgot what is due to the conscience of mankind as to inquire of Sir Edward Goschen why his Government should go to war for "a scrap of paper." The historic phrase contrasted with President Wilson's disinterested fight "for a scrap of paper" in the settlement of the Panama Tolls. But it was, perhaps, on a par with the Chancellor's declaration in the Reichstag that the invasion of Belgium and Luxembourg were wrongful acts, to be defended only as military exigencies. As for events in St. Petersburg, Count Pourtales, the German Ambassador, asked of M. Sazonoff three times if Russia would agree to demobilise. Three times the answer was "No"; and the Ambassador in hurrying away left behind him not only his declaration of war, but also the alternative declaration, with which he was furnished, for the event of it still being peace. The point was afterwards made that the rupture between Germany and Russia was thus dramatically precipitated, just at the moment when at Vienna there was a hope of Russia and Austria-Hungary coming to terms. We need not labour such details or dwell upon diplomatic conversations over the telephone. The narrative as a whole amounts to this—that Germany was ready for war and intended to have it.

There was a final reason why Great Britain did

not stand aside. The French Fleet was in the Mediterranean guarding the route to Egypt. The Channel was thus open to the German Navy, and from the pavilions of Dover and Folkestone the visitors of August would have watched the destruction of Calais and Boulogne. Moreover, at the Hague Convention, Germany had reserved her right to strew the ocean with mines which are as fatal to neutral shipping as to the enemy. As subsequent happenings proved, these engines of destruction would have closed the Channel and silently blockaded the Thames itself. Yet Sir Edward Grey, though doubtless he regarded intervention as inevitable, persistently declined, during the negotiations, to use the fact as a diplomatic weapon. He was pressed to declare himself, both from Paris and St. Petersburg. It was only when war was certain that he assured France of protection by the British Fleet if the German Navy steamed through the Straits of Dover.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE PRUSSIAN TRADITION

WE may ask how it came about that the nation which produced Luther and Beethoven, Goethe, Schiller, and Heine—a nation so orderly, so far-sighted in its municipal life, so domestic and so industrious—a nation which justly prided itself on scholarship, on the arts and the sciences—should thus plunge Europe into war. The word Prussia itself may give us the clue. It means *next to Russia*. Brandenburg, where reigned the Great Elector, was a Mark or March, a border province, peopled by a race of sentinels against Slavdom—peopled, that is, by men who were always on duty. As Germany, blessed by one language though not by one religion, felt her way towards political unity, one of two developments must needs determine her outlook. Either the bonhomie of the Bavarian, the Wurtemburger, and the Saxon must have radiated over the sterile east; or the hard spirit of Prussia must have imposed itself on the vine-clad west. The pressure of Czardom forced the German Peoples to look up to the Hohenzollerns. When the Electors of Brandenburg made themselves into

kings, it was Prussia, not Brandenburg, that they selected for a title. In due course the wider area of modern Germany was also hammered into the Prussian model. The march in step and the iron ramrod which *Old Dessauer* invented for the troops of Friedrich Wilhelm transformed the Rhinelanders themselves into a vast parade ground. The political ideals of the nation became the political ideals of the Pomeranian Grenadier and his Junker Squire. It was arguable that since Bismarck and Moltke welded together the German Empire, no artist or teacher had arisen therein towards whom, as to Tolstoy, the world could look with gratitude.

The fear of Russia, always crippling Socialism, prevented Germany attaining unto freedom. It was possible for the Emperor William, after dismissing Bismarck, to declare without a blush :

“There is only one master in this country, and I am he. I shall suffer no other beside me.”

German scholars claimed to be foremost in the pursuit of truth, but German editors were hand-cuffed by the bureaucracy. The theologians freely discussed the Deity. The cartoonist whose sense of humour was tickled by the Kaiser’s moustachios, went to prison. “All who assist me in my great work,” said this king, “I shall heartily welcome, but those who oppose me in this task I shall crush.” Again :

“I regard my whole position and my task as given me by heaven.”

Once more :

" I am leading you towards days of glory."

No other sovereign in Europe allowed himself in time of peace to use language so calculated to evoke apprehension. " Remember," said he, " that the German people are the chosen of God. On me, on me, as German Emperor, the Spirit of God has descended. I am His weapon, His sword, and His vicegerent. Woe to the disobedient. Death to cowards and unbelievers." The words could be matched by many others from the same lips. The royal orator talked of

" My unshakeable conviction that He, *our former ally at Rossbach and Dennewitz*, will not leave me in the lurch. He has taken such infinite pains with our ancient Brandenburg and our House that we cannot suppose He has done this for no purpose."

At Coblenz he waxed eloquent about his grandfather's " consecrated foot." From his conscripts he demanded " absolute ironbound obedience." The Socialists were " a rabble, unworthy to bear the name of Germans"—" a treasonable band." The theatre itself was to be " an instrument of the monarch." When Prince Henry of Prussia was dispatched to China there was a good deal of this verbal exuberance. By way of avenging the death of certain missionaries, the Prince promised to preach what he called " the gospel of Your Majesty's anointed person." To that Majesty " the Imperial Crown had come with

thorns.” The Emperor answered in words which have become notorious :

“ Should, however, anyone attempt to affront us, or to infringe our good rights, then strike out with mailed fist, and, if God will, weave around your young brows the laurel which nobody in the whole German Empire will begrudge you.”

Englishmen did not know whether or not to take this monarch seriously. In the pages of *Punch* he was pitilessly ridiculed, both by poem and by picture. Common people would say outright that he was mad. Doctors, who read his utterances, shrugged their shoulders and declared that they recognised the mental symptoms. They commented on his ruthless early rising, and suggested that Europe would sleep better at nights if the Kaiser would show the example. He seemed to be a man perpetually on the strain. The Hohenzollern family, closely allied by kinship with the Bavarians, undoubtedly inherited a tinge of insanity. Both the Emperor’s parents died of a fell disease, and he himself was afflicted, if print is to be believed, with a distressing malady. “ This crowned comedian,” wrote Clemenceau fiercely, “ this poet, musician, sailor, warrior, pastor ; this commentator, absorbed in reconciling Hammurabi with the Bible, giving his opinion on every problem of philosophy, speaking on everything and saying nothing ! ” He was “ another Nero ”—“ Rome in flames is not sufficient for him ; he demands the destruction of the Universe.” That was the Gallic invective which greeted the German advance on Paris. It was a part of the

drama that the stability of the European System should depend on the sole judgment of this one man. That stability also involved the United States. American merchants bitterly complained that their business should be ruined and their credit impaired because of some remote decision by an Emperor in Berlin who suffered from nerves. "A grain of sand in a man's flesh," wrote Zola of Napoleon III., "and Empires totter and fall." It is the peril of all centralised despotisms.

To indict this Prince is an unwelcome task. He was grandson of Queen Victoria, who died in his arms. Throughout his long reign he was always a welcome guest in this country, now at Highcliffe, on the south coast ; then, again, at Lowther Castle, in Westmorland. He posed habitually as the peace-keeper of Europe, and claimed that in 1901 he prevented a powerful coalition against Great Britain. But it is essential to despotism that the one appointed potentate should assume responsibility for whatever is achieved by the State, be it good or bad. We cannot agree with the Archbishop of York, who in his courtly way appeals to sacred memories of the Kaiser, and seeks to exonerate him at the expense of his advisers and his troops. History has not spared the Stuarts, the Bourbons, and the Buonapartes. It may be that history will reckon still more heavily with the Hohenzollerns. One gracious figure alone sheds a pleasant lustre over that remorseless dynasty. The Emperor Frederick, as Crown Prince, made at least some attempt to moderate the excesses of the

Franco-German War. Had he lived, his might have been a liberalising reign. The better mind of Germany might have gained the ascendant. He was cut off in his prime. A young and untried man ascended the throne—a man vain and versatile—whose ambition it was to play a Rehoboam's part. He succeeded. The armies of his grandfather were doubled ; doubled also was the taxation of the people. It was unnecessary—Germany lay under no grievance. Her territory included the rich heart of Europe. Her commerce rose by leaps and bounds. Her ships plied the seas in perfect safety. Everywhere her people were treated with hospitality and consideration, and, had her policy been sympathetic, she would not have lacked friends.

The events of 1914 were in line with the career of the Hohenzollerns, as traceable in those ancestral traditions in which the Emperor William was deeply read. Over that sometimes ugly record, a tolerant and even flattering light had been shed, not merely by the German historian, Treitschke, but by the moody genius of Carlyle. Compared with this historical propaganda, the admiration of republican France for Napoleon was harmless. Buonaparte was regarded as an artist, who appeared once, achieved glory, and could not be imitated. But the German intellect is philosophic, logical, co-ordinative. Her professors set themselves, not to condone the wars of Frederick and Moltke, but to establish those wars as living precedents to be followed by Germany whenever

she thought that she could win. The philosophy was clothed in pompous language. It was set forth with a great display of erudition. But there was nothing in it that inspired, except to the task of destruction. Much that was said in Prussian treatises on *Real Politik* had been more gracefully said by Macchiavelli in his "Prince." Might was the only right. Christianity is meant for the family, but not for the State. "The agitation for peace" is immoral and "anæmic." "The existence of all small States" is "pitiable," and man's life must be "a persistent struggle for possessions, power, and sovereignty." War is "a biological necessity." So wrote the pamphleteer, Bernhardi, a retired General who was ignored by England and in a measure by the best brains in his own country, until the war came, when his books sold by the ten thousand. In the comparisons between Russia and Germany it was not forgotten that, while one country produced Tolstoy, the other was fed upon Treitschke, who taught that "law was the weakling's game"—that it was better to steal than to take. Behind these conceptions lurked what may fairly be called the terror of Cain. Germany, having attacked so many of her neighbours in the past, constantly expected that she herself would receive a blow. Her whole existence was at last summed up in the determination to strike first. Although she was in fact the aggressor, she persuaded herself that she was defending her Empire against Russia—and that England was plotting her destruction.

Germany did not remember that, on the whole, other nations had respected the peace of Europe. Cooped up at Sedan, the army of Macmahon did not infringe the neutrality of Belgium. Russia herself, having fought her way to San Stefano, within sight of the coveted minarets of Constantinople, drew back lest Europe should be involved. These instances of good faith counted for little at Berlin. Nothing is stranger than Bernhardi's conviction that Great Britain, with her precious hostages to peace, was actively fomenting war against Germany. In his private conversation, Treitschke would rave by the hour against England until he would be asked the question of Heine, how a country so faithless could have produced Shakespeare. "I should like the Bavarians to meet the English, just once," said the Emperor, when the full bitterness of war entered into his brain. The Crown Prince Rupert replied in an Army Order, which we may quote :

" Soldiers of the Sixth Army, we have now the good fortune to have the English at last before us, the troops of that people whose envy for years has worked to surround us with a ring of enemies in order to strangle us. We have them especially to thank for this bloody war. Therefore when dealing with this enemy, exact requital for their hostile malice, for so many heavy sacrifices. Show them that Germans are not so easily to be struck from off the world's history. Show them that through German strokes of a very special kind. Here is the enemy who stands most of all in the way of the restoration of peace.—RUPERT."

In *Jugend*, the famous illustrated weekly journal published in Munich, Herr Ernst Lissauer distilled this animus into a poem, translated thus:

"French and Russian they matter not,  
A blow for a blow and a shot for a shot:  
We love them not, we hate them not."

But against England, it is

"Hate by water and hate by land,  
Hate of the head and hate of the hand,  
Hate of the hammer and hate of the crown,  
Hate of seventy millions, choking down.  
We love as one, we hate as one,  
We have one foe, and one alone—  
ENGLAND."

That language summed up much else of the same kind. "Perfidious Albion," the Judas of Europe, was charged with "shame unspoken," with "cunning calculation," with vileness of heart. To Napoleon this had been "a nation of shopkeepers"; to the Prussian it was "a nation of pedlars." The vendetta was pressed under the direct sanction of the Almighty. "You are Germans," cried the Emperor. "God help us." The issue was "to be or not to be, German Power and German existence"—so "Forward with God, who will be with us as He was with our ancestors." "May the Lord God strengthen us," so wrote the Empress to German women, "in our holy work of Love." "Down with the foes of Brandenburg," said her husband to his Potsdam Guards; and Prince Bülow put it, "Even if the world be filled with Devils, the German People will

defend and maintain its place in the sun." Let us not be misunderstood. In time of war, flam-buoyant language is used in many quarters. King George himself, in simple terms, commended his soldiers to God and prayed for victory. The Czar, speaking in the Kremlin, appealed to "the downtrodden principles of peace and truth." But the particular feature of the German outbursts was their purely tribal spirit. It was not peace, not truth, not any general principle, applicable to all mankind, that mattered, but only Germany.

To the Prussian, the Hohenzollerns had been for centuries akin to divinity. Yet they were hardly the heroes that altruism would select for adoration. Macaulay, in his picturesque way, described the father of Frederick the Great as a cross between Moloch and Puck. On more than one occasion this savage parent attempted to kill his illustrious son. Yet in Prussia his every crime was condoned because he was a militarist. He starved every institution, including his family, in order that Prussia, standing twelfth among the Powers of Europe, might have an Army ranking fourth. His troops, including the Potsdam Brigade of Giants, numbered 85,000, and to these forces Frederick the Great, in his turn, added his own genius for duplicity. It was he who taught Prussia that a State may, at the selected moment, tear up treaties, repudiate pledges, and violate frontiers. Even in the eighteenth century his cynicism was a byword. But in the Hohen-

zollern family and the Prussian bureaucracy, the annals of his trickery have been for generations a grammar of international ethics.

The attack upon Belgium, which hereafter we will describe, merely repeats on a new arena the seizure of the Silesian Duchies by Frederick the Great. In one case, as in the other, Prussia had, with other Powers, guaranteed the integrity of the frontiers which she crossed. Maria Theresa had as ample reason to be assured of Prussia's good faith as had the Grand Duchess of Luxembourg. In one case, as in the other, the repudiation of treaties cost the world a long and bloody war. In the Silesian campaigns 850,000 soldiers lost their lives, and Prussia alone, a kingdom of only 5 million inhabitants, sacrificed 180,000 men. Her civil population diminished by half a million. Her towns and villages were destroyed or deserted. She only avoided famine by converting seed corn into bread. For a generation she was condemned to poverty, and when Napoleon appeared she was powerless to resist him. Yet the Treitschke School has maintained that it was better for Prussia to secure Silesia by force and by fraud than by peaceful annexation. In thus betraying Maria Theresa, Frederick killed more than 850,000 men. He struck a blow at honesty as an element in Prussian statecraft. As long ago as 1848, Disraeli pointed out that there could be no peace in Europe if the German conduct, even at that date, towards Denmark went "uncensured," and no one regards Disraeli as an

idealist whose conscience would be easily outraged.

The Emperor William the First, standing amid his feudal princes in the great hall of Versailles, with France crushed under his jackboots, was doubtless an epic figure. Even so shrewd an historian as Lord Bryce was in his day captured by the glamour of Bismarck and Moltke, who rebuilt, in a sense, the Holy Roman Empire. Indeed, had the Hohenzollerns so willed it, the unity of Germany might have been as great a matter of rejoicing in Europe as the unity of Italy. But it is forgotten sometimes that in 1849, twenty years before Sedan, an assembly of reigning German Princes, with the approval of all that made for Liberalism in mid-Europe, offered the Imperial Crown to the King of Prussia. It would have been a pacific unification, on constitutional and progressive lines. Lord Bryce himself tells us that the golden moment passed away because the Hohenzollern Prince "was unhappily entangled with notions of divine right and various other mediæval whimsies and sentiments." He desired not a free and a consolidated Germany, but an enlarged despotism for his own family. It came by war. Three times in six years did the Hohenzollerns flesh their swords to the hilt in the best blood of Christendom. Three times did they strike suddenly at the very heart of civilisation. Denmark was bereft of Schleswig-Holstein. Austria was deserted and betrayed. France, most foolishly guided, as all men agree, was

tricked by a telegram into a dispute that cost her two provinces and a bloody revolution. When the greater conflict than all broke out, the Emperor William claimed that Germany had refrained from battle for forty-three years. If he had reckoned by the half-century he could have boasted still more confidently that Prussia had only made war in Europe four times.

Four great wars in fifty years—wars, be it remembered, waged not on the confines of the world. On each occasion Prussia attacked a neighbour as civilised as herself. She did not spare even the kingdoms that spoke her language. Because Hanover refused to turn against Austria, Hanover was obliterated. If Saxony and Baden had been less amenable, their fate also would have been the same.

The *pax Germanica* did indeed last over forty-three years. But within five years of Sedan, Bismarck, distressed at the recovery of France, was plotting once more to bleed her white. In 1875 he laid his plans for another war. And it was to be a war involving Belgium. The little kingdom was accused, as Serbia was accused, of harbouring assassins, and of interfering in the ecclesiastical concerns of the Fatherland. An inspired article in the Berlin *Post* asked the question, “Is war in sight?” Peace was preserved by the joint veto of the Czar, who was visiting Berlin, and Queen Victoria acting with her Government. In essence, it was the same restraining influence that failed in 1914.

With the accession of the Czar Nicholas II. to the throne of Russia, the Emperor William was furnished with an unparalleled opportunity of benefiting his generation. The Czar, by a Rescript, proposed to the world a limitation of armaments. To Germany, confronted by Russia on one flank and France on the other, the offer was manifestly advantageous. It meant that the Slav need no longer be feared as a potential conscript. But Germany would have none of such counsels. Her answer was to increase her Army and add unto it a Navy capable, as she hoped, of crippling the British Fleet. One by one the Powers of Europe, including Germany herself, were driven downwards into debt and prospective bankruptcy. When Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman reduced naval construction in British dockyards, Prussia promptly started a new Programme. When Mr. Churchill offered a naval holiday, Grand Admiral von Tirpitz held on his course. It was only thus that the bureaucracy could meet the rising tide of Parliamentarism—the growing insistence of the Socialists.

The nations, as a whole, were not committed to the Prussian thesis that war was inevitable. In 1907 the second peace conference met at The Hague. In the list of signatories appears first the name of “His Majesty, the German Emperor, King of Prussia.” He and other illustrious heads of States declared themselves to be “animated by a strong desire to concert for the maintenance of general peace”; they were “resolved to promote

by their best efforts the friendly settlement of international disputes." They "recognised the solidarity uniting members of the society of civilised nations." They were "desirous of extending the Empire of law and of strengthening the appreciation of international justice." They would "agree to use their best efforts to ensure the pacific settlement of international difficulties." Arrangements were made for arbitration, and where disputes are unsuited to that judicial process, mediation by friendly powers is not to be regarded as an unfriendly act. The Powers were not placed under compulsion to refrain from war, for there was no higher authority than the Powers to impose that compulsion. But they did solemnly forswear war as a policy. They did solemnly define that scheme of mediation which Sir Edward Grey sought in vain to apply to the Serbian dispute. And Germany signed these provisions, without reservation. Her Emperor's name stood first. Why, then, did the Convention fail? Was there merely an act of treachery by certain Powers to the common sense of the world? The Conference failed because, while ostensibly labouring for Peace, it was not permitted to discuss disarmament. The statesmen went home to spend still more money in preparing for the great war of which they had just expressed such disapproval.

It will hardly be denied that Germany was among the least inclined even to consider the positive policy of peace. She was not satisfied with the map of Europe or of the world. She was

bitterly jealous of the British and French Empires. It upset her statesmen to observe that in New York there were as many Germans as in many of her larger cities, and that these lost sons of the Fatherland were glad to exchange the Prussian drill sergeant and the surveillance by Prussian police for the free institutions, the Anglo-Saxon language, and literature of the United States. At the very moment when war broke out, Germany was boldly negotiating with Holland for a ship-building port to be conceded at Rotterdam to the Vulkan Company. Her writers often reminded the Dutch that their true mission lay within the Prussian domination. Yet Germany, of all powers in Europe, had most to gain by peace and most to risk by war. Her commerce was flourishing ; war killed it. Her population was rising ; war swept away the bravest and the best. And there was, too, another and graver consideration.

For, in its broad and cruel sweep, the war of 1914 was, in the jargon of the time, a supersiege. The anguish of beleaguerment which fell upon the cities of Jerusalem and Babylon, on Constantinople, Paris, and Strassburg, now threatened the two vast Empires which covered mid-Europe. The onrush of six armies into France, the bloody conflicts on the Drina, the desperate counterblow in East Prussia against General Rennenkampf and his advancing Cossacks were sorties against the natural entrenchments which encircled the Teutonic territories. Yet by beating the Belgians back to Antwerp, and by pressing her lines to the very

gates of Paris, Germany did not set herself free. She was no nearer to vital contact with the wheat and the wealth of the new world. Nor did she cut off the supplies of her opponents. Russia remained the master of illimitable harvests. France and Great Britain could renew their strength by drawing upon the trade routes of the Atlantic, the Pacific, and the Mediterranean. A long war impoverished the Allies and inflicted untold miseries on their peoples. But it did not annihilate the Allies by starvation. Germany, on the other hand, was conscious that the siege which her people were enduring, like all sieges, must succeed, if it be obstinately maintained. By land and by sea she was almost as isolated as Kiao-Chou, surrounded by the Japanese. In the free port of Hamburg, sixteen hundred ships lay idle. The utmost that foresight could suggest was an immense purchase of commodities before war broke out. This foresight was shown by Germany. But stores, even if replenished by importations through neutral countries, must ultimately be depleted. Germany fought with bravery, but as a man fights who must win quickly. No attempt will be here made to condone the action of her Army in hostile territory, but it must be remembered, as an element in those offences, that to her troops, dying daily by the ten thousand, a victory delayed or a victory frustrated invited the spectre of famine to throw its dreadful shadow over millions of German homes, as yet remote from the reverberations of the guns.

In 1870, Germany, not as yet so dependent on foreign trade, had the less reason to consider these things. But Bismarck and Moltke did not challenge their neighbours to a war on two fronts. When they fought, they isolated their victim. And they were particularly considerate of the always tender susceptibilities of neutrals, against whose interests all war must be an offence. When attacking France, Bismarck was careful to avoid an appearance of aggression. He tempted his enemy to commit that folly, and so was able to pose as the reluctant defender of Prussian rights. Moreover, he used Belgium, not to drag in England, but to keep her out of the struggle. By some trick, which has never been fully explained, he secured from Benedetti, the French Ambassador, a draft treaty in that unfortunate man's handwriting, whereby France, acting behind England's back, was to seize Belgium. When war came, Bismarck himself communicated this damning, though hardly authoritative, document to *The Times*, and so alienated British sympathy from the Emperor Napoleon. It was unscrupulous, but it was skilful—the stroke of a master hand. The war against France alone was brief and decisive. The brunt of it was soon over, and all that remained was the easier, if longer, task of bludgeoning a beaten opponent into acceptance of humiliating terms. What Bismarck wanted was a Germany, united and prosperous, strongly defended yet content with her frontiers and her commerce. If he accepted Alsace-Lorraine, it was with foreboding.

In 1914, Germany had outgrown Bismarck and Moltke, the elder. Their ruthless yet delicate cunning had hardened into the crude idea that force alone counts, and that every consideration of diplomacy must be subordinated to military advantage, as interpreted in the narrowest sense. The mandarins, who marched their legions into Brussels, not as an unavoidable necessity, but as an occasion for displaying that survival of unregenerate Potsdam, the goose-step, did not see that they had weakened the strategic position of their country. Not only was the public conscience offended. Not only was British intervention provoked. Not only did Belgian valour draw a German Army from its true objective. When Germany invested Antwerp she closed that useful port not against the Allies, who were independent of neutral ports, but against herself. She strengthened the very blockade from which she must suffer so severely. Every mile of neutral coast was an asset to Germany, and Belgium would have been more useful as a neutral than as a fighting Ally, or as a conquered province.

One might moralise at infinite length upon the causes of the upheaval in Europe. Let us be content with a sentence or two. Statesmen had relied on a paradox, and the paradox broke down. They had said that if you would have peace, you must prepare for war, but it proved to be the other way. By building up armaments, a nation evolves a military caste. This caste is contemptuous of commerce. And the very expenditure is itself a

danger. In France, the Revolution inevitably followed a long series of deficits which no financier could rectify. In all countries save Britain, deficits had become in the twentieth century the rule for European Budgets. In the four countries of the Continent which were principally concerned in the war, the borrowings had been immense. No jugglery could conceal them. Germany herself had difficulty in raising more money, save at humiliating interest. French finance was in confusion. Under these circumstances, some event of an unusual character must needs break in to relieve the tension. With 3000 miles of frontier passing through cities and even houses, a frontier that intercepts the mill and the mill-race, the street and the curbstone, Canada and the United States, by avoiding fortifications and warships on the great lakes, had enjoyed a hundred years of peace. Europe also, after tolerating military despotisms for a century, received the reward which she deserved.

## CHAPTER V

### THE AWAKENING OF BRITAIN

WE now turn to the spectacle of a free Empire arousing itself, with astonishing rapidity, for what was in effect a work of rescue. If the sorely tried city of Paris was saved from a fate as horrible as that of Constantinople—bombardment followed by storm, and storm followed by barricades, and barricades burnt out by incendiaryism—the honour belongs to what the German Emperor called “French’s contemptible little Army”—the Army of the “treacherous English.” While, behind the scenes, diplomacy was still mouthing its strange abracadabra, the truth was slowly dawning on London and, later, on Lancashire and Yorkshire that something serious was amiss. The people were dazed. Not for a hundred years had England waged war in Europe, and never had there been a precedent for this war. Battles were to be expected compared with which Blenheim was a skirmish and Waterloo a reconnaissance. It was war on land and sea ; war above the earth, on the earth, and under the earth ; war by day and war by night ; without quarter for age or sex. The

martial instincts of the French were stimulated by battlepieces displayed to the acre in galleries and palaces, and by the mouldering trophies which fill the vast chambers of the Invalides and surround the empurpled tomb of Napoleon. Berlin boasted museums, not less impressive, and there was not a town in Germany that did not cherish some iron-grey monument to the men who died in 1870. In streets, however humble, the uniform of the conscript was a familiar sight. But in England, such memorials were less obtrusive. Peace, not war, inspired the artist. A modest collection of relics in the banquet-room of Whitehall, a popular show-place at Greenwich, the lions in Trafalgar Square, and the Crypt of St. Paul's—these summed up the memories of modern war. To the Englishman, Spion Kop was an important military event, and Colenso was a momentous battle. He saw nothing of fortified cities, and was alarmed by talk of a Channel tunnel. Outside of Limerick and Londonderry he could trace few scars of cannon-balls on his buildings, and even in Limerick and Londonderry the scars were ancient and, after all, only Irish. This was the man that discovered in a night that he belonged, willy-nilly, to the fratricidal brotherhood of enrolled Europe.

With Europe clattering to the colours, the House of Commons still observed its decent routine. While the railways of Germany were laden with munitions of war and with trains full of conscripts, a Scottish member moved, with a certain fine persistence, for a full return of all sleeping saloons,

at present running on the Continent. His eyes were apparently blind to the solemn vision of the carriages which roared to the frontiers, their panelling gaily chalked with inscriptions—"nach Paris"—"nach London"—and "Grandmother Nicholas," and their roofs green with linden boughs. The women of Germany were themselves mobilised. Weeks before the war they were told at precisely what bay of a station platform they were to stand, and when the hour came, they kept the appointment. Coffee and sandwiches were ready to be handed to the troops as they passed on their way, and as the trains moved off one by one, "Deutschland über Alles" rang out in tones gentler, though not less resolute, than man's. As the war proceeded, those German women, debarred from winning the Iron Cross for Valour, changed their wedding rings for iron, and so contributed by their sacrifice to the funds of war. So little was London aware of these things that Lord Loreburn himself, after years spent in the Cabinet, thought it expedient at such a crisis to deliver a spirited attack on the Foreign Office because, with the issues of peace and war hanging in the balance, Sir Edward Grey did not immediately send an expedition to Albania. How unworthy, said Lord Loreburn, was such apathy of the Gladstonian tradition !

But as the days wore on, people became watchful. The post offices announced that owing to floods in Bulgaria and other circumstances the delivery of foreign mails might be delayed. In the agony column of *The Times* there appeared an unusual

advertisement. His Imperial and Royal Apostolic Majesty, the Emperor of Austria, summoned all reservists domiciled in the United Kingdom, and graciously offered an amnesty to those deserters who now returned to their country. Strange crowds filled the station at Charing Cross. It seemed as if all Soho were there assembled. Waiters and cooks, who had spent their lives in restaurants—hundreds of them—stood forth for once as men. At the barriers they tore themselves, pale and resolute, from the embraces of tearful women who, when they had gone, remained in pitiful groups to finish their weeping. The departing conscripts freely intermingled with one another. In the same carriage would be found Austrian and Frenchman, German and Belgian, still meeting as friends. Outside, on the pavements, a restless crowd, swollen by holiday-makers, bought up newspapers by the million, and decked themselves with flags and favours, which were sold at fancy prices by ever-enterprising hawkers. At this end of an era, this opening of a new dispensation, there was but little Jingoism. Indeed, when war was in progress, crowds of Germans sang their patriotic songs outside their consulate, no one entering a protest. With Germany we had never had a quarrel. No event like Majuba Hill rankled in the popular mind. No warrior-saint like Gordon was to be avenged. The Royal House itself was Germanic in origin. The music halls were thus taken aback. At one of them, a film showing the reception of President

Poincaré by the Czar was regarded moodily, and, despite the appropriate rendering of the Marseillaise, without a cheer. It is true that on the night when the British Ultimatum expired, some thousands of youths gathered before Buckingham Palace and surrounded the Nelson statue. But the shouting was soon over, and we may ask what the shades of Nelson muttered when the French tricolour floated gaily around the memorials of Trafalgar. Doubtless there was an excess of treating at the public-houses. Bounty money was wantonly squandered, women as well as men thus relieving feelings which needed some outlet. But serious crime fell suddenly to a minimum, and, if it had not been for cases of espionage and intoxication, the courts of first instance might have enjoyed a holiday.

For hours together the crowds stood in Whitehall, gazing eagerly at the Admiralty and the War Office, or watching the arrivals at Downing Street, yet seeing nothing. Barefoot children, happy though unwashen scions of an Imperial race, patrolled the streets, their uniform devised from newspapers and their music beaten from biscuit tins. An indulgent police, grateful for any relief from the tension, allowed these youngsters to perform their numerous evolutions amid the interrupted traffic. Then as by magic there sprang to duty a new force in the national organism. General Baden-Powell, the defender of Mafeking, could hardly be called a favourite at the War Office, where his popularity was regarded with a trace

of jealousy. But to the British boy he was the ideal person. As Chief Scout he wielded an authority which would have been envied by Hiawatha himself. At this moment of national crisis, his youthful legions assumed control over the national destinies. Armed with passes and protected by uniforms which had seen hard service on Hampstead Heath, these lads boarded trams and trains, dodged the heaviest traffic, and otherwise demonstrated what youth can achieve when entrusted by a grateful Empire with dispatches. The most sacred of departments were guarded, within and without, by these formidable youngsters. The post office itself was so depleted of telegraph boys that express letters had to be refused. The historian will doubtless declare that the battle of the Marne was won, not only on the playing-fields of Eton, but also among the forests of Chingford.

During these days of preparation, the Continent of Europe seemed to recede into a gathering cloud. Over the doomed countries the hand of authority spread the impalpable veil of the censorship. There was a sultry silence, save when, out of the gloom, some travel-stained refugee would emerge with strange news of the upheaval. One would tell of his last night at Dijon, how the placid flowing of the Meuse, so soon to be stained to a darker tinge, was rudely crossed by a different torrent—infantry, cavalry, and guns, roaring through the dark on their way to the frontier—how, when day dawned, not a waiter remained in the hotel; all had gone. Two visitors at Ems,

# The "Scrap of Paper"

## ARTICLE II.

Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, His Majesty the Emperor of Austria, King of Hungary and Bohemia, His Majesty the King of the French, His Majesty the King of Prussia, and His Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias, declare, that the Articles mentioned in the preceding Article, are considered as having the same force and validity as if they were textually inserted in the present Act, and that they are thus placed under the guarantee of their said Majesties.

## ARTICLE VII.

Belgium, within the limits specified in Articles I., II., and IV. shall form an independent and perpetually neutral State. It shall be bound to observe such neutrality towards all other States.



PALMERSTON  
Belgian Ambassador  
VAN DE VELDE  
Belgian Minister  
ENFERT  
French Ambassador  
H. SEBASTIANI  
Italian Ambassador  
BULOW  
Prussian Ambassador  
POZZO DI BORGIO  
Russian Ambassador

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THIS PHOTOGRAPH IS A TRANSLATION AND FACSIMILE OF THE SIGNATURES FROM THE ORIGINAL TREATY OF 1831 GUARANTEEING THE INDEPENDENCE AND NEUTRALITY OF BELGIUM, WHICH WAS CONFIRMED BY THE SIX POWERS IN THE FAMOUS TREATY OF 1839, THE BREAKING OF WHICH BY GERMANY IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PRESENT WAR

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man and wife, told how the soldiers seized the hotel for a hospital ; they must pack up instantly ; luggage must be left to its fate ; so to the train and the Belgian boundary ; that line must be crossed on foot, with a handbag or two only to be carried ; thus to London—the man outworned, the woman in hysterics. A girl arrived, evicted summarily from her school in the Rheinland ; no money on her ; her memory gone ; hopelessly stranded in London, within ten minutes' taxi-drive of her parents' wealthy home in Mayfair. A gentleman of position, with family, finds himself in Paris ; stands for nine hours before a booking office ; and so escapes. Other fugitives, having reached Boulogne, are denied tickets, but secure cigarette cards and so rush the gangway. Thousands of tourists find an asylum in Switzerland, in Denmark, and in Sweden. They trickle into safety through Italy or, it may be, Holland. In London too, there are evidences of the flight from the wrath to come. The Haymarket is black with Americans, who besiege the offices of the shipping agents. Their losses and their troubles loomed large at the time, but were trivial by comparison with the miseries in store. The Americans were, after all, only anxious to get home. Three months later, Europe was overrun by wretched people whose homes had disappeared—Poles and Prussians in the east, Belgians and French in the west—all of them, friends or foes, alike the victims of an atrocious conflict.

So it was that Death, armed with unusual terrors,

usurped the Throne of Christendom. Yet, ere his reign began, there were thousands, in all grades of society, who paid their last homage to the Instinct of Life. In order that "need marriages," as Germans called them, might be celebrated, Clergy and Registrars relaxed their rules and their fees. To the soldier bridegroom not more than forty-eight hours' leave was granted, and when the bride left the altar, she was, too often, already in effect a widow. Two sons of the Kaiser, Princes of Prussia, were thus married in Berlin—the people too preoccupied to applaud—and, in one recorded case, the lady fell dead at the altar, where she was left by her husband, who had a quarter of an hour in which to rejoin his regiment. Great names came into these romances, a Moltke, a Bülow, a Bismarck, a Blücher, and a Delbrück among them, but what a commentary on Bernhardi's doctrine that war is a method of selecting the fittest for survival ! It was, on the contrary, a sacrifice of the young and the healthy. The old and the weak were not wanted for the firing line and the casualty lists. Confronted by such elimination of good lives, the actuaries of the National Insurance Scheme had to revise their liability tables and in an upward direction, though the authorities did not forget the grim fact that every young man killed outright left behind him "a reserve value" which helped the fund. There were, in all, 30,000 doctors in the United Kingdom. They had to leave the ordinary sick, because the case of the ordinary strong was so desperately

worse. The healers themselves were often wounded, so that, with a fourfold demand for their skill, the supply was in part shot away. Moreover, medical students who, in normal times, would have recruited the profession, abandoned their training and hurried to the front as dressers. The regular army against disease was thus cut off from its reinforcements. But it was the women, and especially the young women, who stood to suffer most. Between the sexes, nature had provided a rough numerical equality. In time of peace this balance was to some extent upset by men's emigration to the Colonies, by their enrolment in the professional army, by their exile in the civil service beyond the seas, and by the low salaries which prevented men at home from marrying. Millions of women, the basis of the suffrage movement, were thus left, even in peace time, to earn an independent living instead of founding homes and rearing a new generation. The mechanical massacre of European manhood directly accentuated this waste, and the unemployment of women, who could not be enrolled as Amazons, was, from the outset, one of the gravest problems which the State had to handle.

In the City of London there were strange events, unparalleled since the South Sea Bubble. As Tuesday followed Monday and Wednesday was followed by Thursday, superstitious people asked what would happen on Friday. It was whispered that already Germany had got in her first blow. Even to the initiated there is a certain obscurity

about the movement of money and of securities in the City of London. But it was asserted that during the crisis which led up to war, Germans sought to restore a momentary confidence by purchasing a large block of British Consols, declared to be a quarter of a million in amount. Prices steadied at the news, when, like the opening of sluice-gates, orders to sell flooded the market. Although nothing had happened to interrupt the passage of locomotives and their burden across the illimitable prairie, Canadian Pacifics dropped a dozen points in twenty-four hours. Settling day in London fell at the end of July. Although a few firms were hammered and their assets at once thrown on the market, the Stock Exchange as an institution weathered the storm. It was still solvent. But, none the less, the war had begun. The first casualty was the suicide of a Berlin banker; the second was the suicide of a stockbroker in London. Technically, they were to one another as enemy aliens. In reality, they had one common foe—the military caste; one common defence—international credit.

On Friday, the 31st of July, the sun rose as usual. The harvest still lay golden in the fields. Millions of spindles filled Lancashire with an industrious murmur. There was no reason why the lawful operations of manufacture and commerce should be suspended. But, as the morning drew on, a queue of clerks, with leathern cases under their arms, might be seen following one another into the Bank of England. Some photographers

arrived and obtained pictures of the unusual scene. Not one of those pictures appeared in the London evening papers. By a spontaneous act of patriotism the press censored itself and said nothing about the run on the Bank of England. That afternoon the Bank rate, which had been raised from 3 to 4 per cent., was doubled to 8 per cent. On Saturday it was 10 per cent. Men hurried to bank or club and secured coin for immediate necessities. In the provinces the captains of industry were mystified at the panic and indignant. But the harm was done. There was nothing for it but to mobilise cash resources as Moltke, the younger, was mobilising his Army Corps. Motor-cars and cycles scoured the lonely roads of the northern counties, bearing reinforcements of coin for the village till. The wages of miners and engineers were forthcoming. But the struggle could not be sustained. Bank Holiday was extended until the 7th of August, and when the doors again opened, the delirious patient had been laid to rest with an anaesthetic. The Stock Exchange was closed. It seemed as if the whole world, except Germany, had fallen under a moratorium. In due course we will compare the financial policy pursued by that country with the financial policy of Great Britain. Enough to say here that on the Black Friday of July 1914, a day never to be forgotten in the city, the faith of some London banks failed. Bagehot had laid it down that when customers are nervous a banker should freely lend. What happened in

London was that a million and a half of money at call and due on bills then maturing was suddenly demanded from the market. The clerks in that queue were taking bills to be discounted at the Bank of England. The Old Lady of Threadneedle Street, conscious that gold had for days been slipping through her fingers, became nervous, and perhaps with reason, for some banks had actually paid depositors in notes and then advised them to obtain coin at the Bank of England. Suddenly the city was told that the Bank of England would discount no more bills. It was as if a bowstring about the neck of the nation's credit had been pulled taut. The market gave a gasp, and in six hours ceased to exist. In Lancashire the price of cotton fell as suddenly as the price of stocks and shares. The Liverpool brokers, like the London brokers, could not stand the differences. The Cotton Exchange was closed, boarded over, and turned into a drill shed. Lancashire resigned herself to short time and short pay. In September 1913 her exports had been nearly 10 millions. In September 1914 they were barely  $6\frac{1}{4}$  millions. In that first week of war the total of cheques reported at the Clearing House was 162 millions, a decrease from the normal of 143 millions.

It was in any case a time for holiday. The sudden dislocation of industry did not create acute distress, except in certain limited areas and trades. With the North Sea turned into an arena of war, the fishermen suffered great priva-

tions. Landladies on the East Coast lost much of the harvest which would have come to them from so fine an August. For a time, the dealers in women's apparel contemplated empty counters. Painting and the drama were struck to the ground. The season for publishers was ruined. A scarcity in woodpulp and a still more severe famine in advertisements reduced newspapers to half their size and drove hundreds of journalists into want. A thousand men of various callings, who had been in affluent circumstances, discovered that they were worth little or nothing. The case was so plain that it was useless to worry about it. Fathers and sons, anxious at least to save their keep, enlisted and went to the war. Within a fortnight, economic necessity, acting as a spur to patriotism, secured half a million recruits for the Empire. In a month or two the number was almost doubled. Americans swore that they were English, and were so enrolled. Men of middle age became suddenly young. Dentists and doctors busily patched up whatever was lacking in teeth or inoculation. There were complaints that zealous firms were cornering khaki and putting up the price of revolvers. Camps filled the parks. Proclamations appeared on the hoardings. Masses of men, in varied garb, marched from barrack to barrack—the raw material of battle. A hundred Members of Parliament joined the colours. Some of them attended debate wearing uniform, and a Bishop in khaki adorned the peers' gallery. Last, but not least, special constables, 14,000 for London

alone, appeared in plain clothes, with chocolate badges in their buttonholes and police bands on their sleeves.

Amid scenes like these, Princess Lichnowsky, the wife of the German Ambassador, walked forth from her great mansion into the Park, her only protection a little dog. She was treated with grave respect. An hour or two later, crowds gathered at Liverpool Street Station to witness the unusual spectacle of an Ambassador departing. They stood silent and respectful as a familiar and popular figure disappeared. At the Embassy a solitary workman removed the brass-plates, and a simple piece of paper indicated that the place had been handed over to the United States. During the months that followed, American diplomacy acted as the universal provider of Europe. Through that medium, letters were delivered, money was forwarded, and negotiations conducted for the exchange of prisoners. The continuance of an American Legation in Brussels may have served an even more important purpose. For months the city was occupied by hostile troops, yet it did not, during that period, share the fate of Louvain.

Germany cannot be congratulated on her behaviour towards departing Ambassadors. It was the first touch of gratuitous brutality in a brutal war. As long as the British attitude was in doubt, British subjects, domiciled in Berlin, were treated with respect. But when the Ultimatum from London was received, a mob surrounded

the Embassy and assaulted all who had the misfortune to resemble a diplomatist. An apology was tendered, but it did not prevent a further incident, very characteristic of the German mind. The train by which the Ambassador left was patrolled, as if he were a criminal bent upon dropping bombs on the bridges. Armed men kept guard over the party. The windows were closed. In the case of the French Embassy, the train was stopped on the Danish frontier, and 5000 marks was demanded for the escort. Confronted by this Oriental exaction, the Ambassador drew a cheque on a Berlin bank, but this was refused. With much difficulty the coin was collected from the party and handed over to the Prussians. When the incredible narrative was disclosed to the world, Germany admitted its accuracy by offering in scornful terms to return the money. She also admitted that she had failed to restore the special train which the Republic furnished for the return of the German Ambassador to Berlin. This first loot was also a subject of protests that forced Prussia to send back her plunder.

Russia was treated even worse. Her Dowager Empress had been visiting Queen Alexandra, her sister. She was offered safe conduct through Berlin to the Russian frontier. On reaching the Prussian capital the safe conduct was cancelled, and she was told, either that she must return whence she had come or travel north to Denmark. In the meantime the departing Russian staff received rough handling from the mob, which

proceeded to parade with enthusiasm before the Japanese Embassy, believing fully that Japan had joined hands with Germany. It was, perhaps, no wonder that fierce counter-demonstrations broke out in St. Petersburg. From ancient times it has been a point of honour with Governments to behave to accredited heralds with all reverence. Russia was not the only nation with a grievance. By what the American Press called an act of "suicidal aberration," the United States Ambassador at Berlin was refused free permission to cable to Washington.

These were mere incidents, but they gravely prejudiced the German case in neutral countries and throughout the British Empire. The Princes, Peoples, and Nationalist leaders of India offered men, money, and jewels. The wild tribes of Chitral and Baluchistan promised camels. The Lamas of Tibet set their prayer-wheels revolving for the success of the British arms and the repose of those souls which would be sacrificed in battle. Dark-skinned chieftains in South Africa inquired what help they could render. Labour leaders who had been excluded from Johannesburg forgot the past and supported the Empire. Russia's exiles, most harshly treated of men, placed themselves at the disposal of Czardom. General Botha, who had led the Burghers against the British, now led Burghers and British against the German, and even against General de Wet himself. The verdict of mankind was not always an instructed verdict. The Cossack, who in his remote hamlet caught

sight of the red flag by day or of the red lamp by night which told him that Holy Russia was at war, groomed his horse and burnished his equipment without knowing against whom he was to level his lance. Still, on the whole, the resentment against Germany was based on substantial grounds. In all quarters of the globe the Englishman and the German lived and traded side by side. Every community could make an instant comparison. The faults and the prejudices of the Anglo-Saxon were preferred to the undoubted virtues of the Teuton.

It was not in the power of the British Parliament to impose taxes on the dependencies. Every offer that was made came by free will. New Zealand equipped a force of 8000 men, placed her ships at the disposal of the Admiralty, and dispatched a cargo of food for the poor in the United Kingdom. Australia provided 20,000 men. Canada promised the same number, and in one week recruited 100,000. Hospital ships and batteries were among the gifts in kind. Quebec sent 4 million lbs. of cheese ; Alberta, half a million bushels of oats ; Ontario, 250,000 bags of flour ; Ceylon, a million lbs. of tea ; and the West Indies, large consignments of sugar. Any German who believed that there would be a Mussulman rising in India was disappointed. The only disaffection that could be fomented was in a remote region of South Africa, near to the frontier of German territory, where a soldier of fortune, Maritz by name, carried over a Commando to the Enemy, and at once received his answer from

General Botha, a man well able, as Labour had discovered to strike hard, and without delay. Even the assistance of De Wet and Beyers, two Boer Generals who had not forgotten the South African War, did not save Maritz from an ignominious flight across the frontier.

From the first, Japan decided that she would fight side by side with her ally, Great Britain. No one would attribute undiluted altruism to this astute and rising Power. Her ultimatum to Germany was, perhaps, the coolest document in history. The Kaiser was politely requested immediately to withdraw from Chinese and Japanese waters German men-of-war and armed vessels of all kinds. Those which could not be withdrawn must be disarmed. On or before the 15th of September the entire leased territory of Kiao-Chou must be surrendered without condition or compensation, with a view to the eventual restoration of the same to China. These were the terms offered by an Asiatic Power to the strongest military State in Europe. Germany made no answer, save a subsequent protest to China against the operations begun by Japan on Chinese territory. China replied contemptuously by reminding Germany of her own invasions of Chinese soil. When the ultimatum expired, Japan issued a manifesto, which for grave humour surely stands as a model. It meant, in a sentence, that Germany was not wanted in the Far East. Her armed preparations were a menace. Japan had "advised" her to go; but, alas, had failed to receive an answer accept-

ing her advice. "It is with profound regret," so concluded the Mikado, "that we, in spite of our ardent devotion to the cause of peace, are thus compelled to declare war, especially at this early period of our reign, and while we are still in mourning for our lamented mother." In order to allay the suspicions of Australia and the United States, Japan was careful to add that she had only acted after "full and frank communication" with her Britannic ally. She even suggested that she was assisting that ally. It may, perhaps, be assumed that both to the United States and to Great Britain she thought it well to make clear that her ambitions were limited to Kiao-Chou, which, according to theory, still belonged to China. A few weeks later, Japan was associating herself with the determination of Russia, France, and Great Britain, only to conclude peace in common; and was, in addition, promulgating a dignified remonstrance against the barbaric methods adopted by the Germany Army.

Italy was not involved. A number of events had weakened her adhesion to that Triple Alliance which was due rather to the calculations of Crispi than to the desires of the Italian people. As a Mediterranean Power, Italy preferred the British Navy to the new Dreadnoughts which Austria was building. She detested Austria's annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the person of the Queen, her royal house was closely united with the kingdom of Montenegro, which as a Slav State shared Serbia's dread of Vienna. By seizing

Tripoli, Italy had destroyed the Emperor William's favourite plan of including Turkey as a fourth party in the Triple alliance. Finally, the people of Italy still desired to absorb a population in the Tridentine province of Austria, which spoke her language, but still lived under the despotism of the Hapsburgs. The emancipation of Italy should be completed, and, with it, that of the allied Rumanians who in Transylvania still laboured under Magyar despotism.

By her alliance, Italy promised her assistance to Germany against France if the war were defensive. Aggression by Germany left Italy with her hands free. She declared that, in her opinion, Germany had in this war assumed the aggressive, and, without a word of demur, Germany accepted the verdict. For some days before hostilities were formally begun, the Government of Berlin endeavoured to provoke France by sending patrols across the frontiers and by shooting Alsatians who attempted to reach the French soil which they still loved as their own. But France with some ostentation held back her forces, and the diplomatic manœuvres failed. One may doubt whether, in any event, Italy would have fought on Germany's side. If, however, her statesmen had been wavering from the straight path of neutrality, their eyes must have been opened by an astounding manifesto from the pen of the Austro-Hungarian Emperor. Serbia, he declared, was "a malevolent opponent," guilty of inciting "to mischievous deeds of madness and high treason"; she was responsible for "a

series of murderous attacks," which left "a visible bloody track of those secret machinations." Austria deplored her "quickly forgetful ingratitude" for innumerable blessings bestowed. Austria had been lenient, patient, devoted to peace, and forgiving. "In this solemn hour," concluded the Emperor, "I am fully conscious of the whole significance of my resolve and my responsibility before the Almighty. I have examined and weighed everything, and, with a serene conscience, I set out on the path to which my duty points." Strange words for a nonagenarian monarch to use, who proposed to plunge Europe into a war which could hardly conclude until he himself had vanished from the scene. But what emotions must have thrilled the Italians as they read the curiously familiar phrases. It was not merely that they knew how Austria had, in fact, treated Serbia, by tariffs, by the denial of an outlet to the Adriatic, and by the annexation of Bosnia. What aroused Italy was the memory of another document, also composed by the Emperor, half a century before. In 1914 he had addressed to the Serbians the same unsubstantiated charges which he addressed to the Piedmontese when they were in revolt. The crimes of Serbia were the crimes attributed at an earlier date to Italians themselves. And in the intervening period the notorious "forbearance" of Austria had not materially changed.

At Rome there lay another aged personage, a spiritual monarch, Pius X. The triple tiara which was imposed on his reluctant brow he owed to

the House of Hapsburg. But for the Austrian veto, exercised for the last time in the College of Cardinals, Rampolla, the friend of France, would have been chosen as Pope. Pius X., enfeebled by his long imprisonment in the Vatican, wrote a last letter to Francis Joseph, enjoining peace. The appeal was fruitless, and the good Pontiff, himself a Venetian, and, as such, full of memories of the great struggle for Italian liberty, sank under the blow. "I was born poor," said he in his will, "I have lived poor, and I die poor." A small annuity for his sister was all that he craved, and his death, which under ordinary circumstances would have moved Europe, was discussed by an overcrowded press in a few paragraphs.

But in the history of faith, the death of Pope Pius X. marked a momentous epoch. The Conclave of Cardinals knew well enough that the war was promoted, not from Catholic Vienna, but from Protestant Berlin. While they were deliberating, they learnt, day by day, of the devastation which had overtaken not only the homes but even the shrines of faithful Belgium. The massacre of St. Bartholomew itself did not exceed in bestial horror, and did not equal in loss of unarmed life and undefended property, the hideous excesses now alleged. A profound impression was created. It deepened into lasting indignation when the Cardinal Archbishop of Malines, whose cathedral, with its incomparable if incomplete belfry, had suffered special damage, was refused safe conduct to his desolated diocese unless he would sign a denial

of the sacrilege thus committed, as Catholics considered, against God and man. These were the terms which orthodox Austria sought to impose on a non-combatant Prince of the Church whose ministrations were demanded by the dying. The terms were ignored, but the Vatican hinted that it would remember "this most unpleasant refusal." If the last act of the departed Pope had been an appeal to the Hapsburg Emperor, the first act of his successor was a personal letter to the Protestant King of England, "the guardian of peace and the master of justice." Amid a scene of unparalleled enthusiasm, twenty thousand citizens of London assembled before the Archbishop's Palace at Westminster, and there knelt to receive the blessing of the exiled Cardinal who, not long after his return to Malines, was placed under arrest by Prussia. Austria, Bavaria, and Saxony pleaded with the Holy Father to bless their Catholic troops. The answer was a stern and unbending silence.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE LAWLESS WAR

IN the opinion of the military caste, which decided the policy of the German Government, war is no more a crime than is the bloodshed which accompanies an operation in surgery. On men holding these views and deliberately imposing them on the rest of their fellow-creatures, it was perhaps incumbent to show, both by precept and by example, that an institution so costly and so hideous in its consequences is at least subject to the laws of honour and chivalry. Vivisection itself, though its aim is supposed to be humanitarian, has continually to search for and display some kind of moral sanction. The German Emperor regarded himself as a knight in shining armour. He was surrounded by the lofty symbols of feudalism. No monarch was better qualified than he, by his despotic status, his intimate association with the Deity, and his advocacy of a higher culture, to inculcate among the combatants that respect for the wounded, that reverence for womanhood, that carefulness for ancient and beautiful landmarks which distinguish civilised from barbarian warfare.

In every war the individual soldier, maddened by the loss of comrades or by the stress of peril, may be guilty of excesses. All that Governments can hope to do is to cultivate among their armies a public opinion which will discourage rapine and lust. Russia closed her vodka shops. France suppressed absinthe. Although public-houses remained open in Great Britain for a reduced period each day, her troops at the front lived practically without intoxicants. In every man's Active Service Pay Book appeared the advice of Lord Kitchener, brief and soldierly: "Be invariably courteous, considerate, and kind," he wrote. "Never do anything likely to injure or destroy property, and always look upon looting as a disgraceful act." Again :

"Your duty cannot be done unless your health is sound. So keep constantly on your guard against any excesses. In this new experience you may find temptations both in wine and women. You must entirely resist both temptations, and, while treating all women with perfect courtesy, you should avoid any intimacy.

"Do your duty bravely,  
Fear God,  
Honour the King."

That was a manly document. The advice was given to troops operating in a friendly country; still, it was great advice. There was no mention of victory or defeat. The supreme issue for the soldier was his honour. In addressing The Hague Convention, which he attended as Plenipotentiary-

Delegate for Germany, Baron Marschall von Bieberstein, in a speech on the use of floating mines—a matter that will engage our attention in due course—spoke thus :

“ As to the sentiments of humanity and civilisation, I cannot admit that there is any government or country which is superior in these sentiments to that which I have the honour to represent.”

Again :

“ The officers of the German Navy, I emphatically affirm, will always fulfil in the strictest fashion the duties which emanate from the unwritten law of humanity and civilisation.”

These were the views of an able and charming German diplomatist, as communicated to the assembled representatives of the Powers. It would have been well if Baron Marschall’s principles had been in accord with the impulses of his Imperial master. Throughout his reign the Kaiser was preparing his legions for Rheims, Louvain, Dinant, and Termonde. He lent the whole weight of his authority to the awful task of driving brutality into the breasts of his soldiers. By this terrible propaganda, the Army had to be forged into an instrument as devoid of compassion for human suffering and as deaf to the appeal of woman or child for mercy as the howitzer or the torpedo. The Emperor successfully trained such an Army, and, when the time came, it did his work without wincing and without remorse. All the atrocities which occurred were foreshadowed in

the German War Book, from which we have already quoted.

"It is my firm conviction," said this monarch, "that every youth who enters a corp or beer-drinking and duelling club will receive the true direction of his life from the spirit which prevails in them. It is the best education which a young man can get for his future life. . . ." In June 1900 the finished product of this system was dispatched to Pekin, there to carry Christian civilisation to the Chinese peoples. "When you meet the foe," cried the Emperor, "you will defeat him. No quarter will be given. No prisoners will be taken. Let all who fall into your hands be at your mercy. Gain a reputation like the Huns under Attila." Seven years later, The Hague Conference agreed that "it is particularly forbidden to declare that no quarter will be given." And even in 1900 a cynical Europe was startled by the shocking instigation not obscurely conveyed to the troops, on whose forbearance would depend the lives and the honour of Chinese women and children. Still, the victims thus consigned to the passion of troops in a distant land were of yellow race. Their fate did not greatly disturb Europe. But when the same methods and the same instigation were applied, not to China, but to Belgium and France, the quotation was dug out from the dust-heaps and it acted on England as a fiery cross. Here, it seemed, was no war of conquest. It was not even a war of defence. It was a war of extermination.

Bismarck had been credited with the saying that

“ You must leave the people through whom you march only their eyes to weep with.” In 1914 the official *communiqué* issued from Berlin was in the same sense. It ran thus :

“ The only means of preventing surprise attacks from the civil population has been to interfere with unrelenting severity and to create examples which by their frightfulness would be a warning to the whole country.”

That was an ultimatum, aimed not at Governments and armies, but at women and children, at aged men and at the babe unborn. It was, in very fact, the resurrection of Attila and his Huns. Even to President Wilson the Kaiser had the boldness to argue that it was necessary to “ frighten the bloodthirsty population.”

The orders of the Emperor were not misunderstood. When the German forces were driven back from Rheims, an ominous proclamation was discovered by the Allies. The inhabitants were warned that, in the battle then hourly expected, they must refrain from interference. No stones must be taken from the streets, nor must any difficulty be put in the way of the soldiers. “ To instil calm into the population of Rheims ”—so runs this memorable disclosure of the Prussian method—eighty-one leading citizens had been arrested as hostages. A list of their names was given, and at the end of it was the significant addition, worthy of the genius of the Inquisition—“ *with some others.* ” Finally came the words :

"These hostages will be hanged at the slightest attempt at disorder. Also the town will be wholly or partially burned, and the inhabitants will be hanged for any infraction of the above. By order of German authorities."

The proclamation was in direct defiance of Article 50 of The Hague Convention, which deals with "military authority over the territory of the hostile state." "No collective penalty," so we read, "pecuniary or otherwise, shall be inflicted upon the population on account of the acts of individuals for which it cannot be regarded as collectively responsible."

The proclamation at Rheims did not stand alone. It was typical of others. The Commune of Grivegnée, near Liége, was similarly threatened. Major Dieckmann promised instant death to anyone retaining explosives in his possession, or failing to keep his lights burning, or resisting domiciliary visits. He also selected hostages whose lives "are at stake if the population of the above-named communes does not keep quiet *under all circumstances.*" The hostages included the priests, the burgomasters, and the members of the Administration of the commune. A further command was :

"I require that all civilians moving about in my sphere of command, and especially those of Beyne, Hensay, Bois de Breux, and Grivegnée, shall show respect to German officers by taking off their hats, and bringing their hands to their heads in a military salute. In case of doubt, whether an officer is in question, *any* German soldier should

be saluted. Anyone failing in this must expect a German soldier to exact respect from him by any method."

These are official documents, not subject to the exaggeration or the partisanship of excited eye-witnesses.

Germany, it must be remembered, was first in the field. Before Russia, Great Britain, and France were effectively mobilised, she had entered Luxembourg and was hurling her massed troops against Liége. On land, at sea, and in the air, it was Germany, therefore, who set the precedents for the conduct of the war. It is only by weighing these precedents that we can appreciate the wave of execration against the Emperor William which, during the months of August and September, swept over the world. People felt that a single military power had reduced, not only the rights of Belgium, but also the laws of war to the value of a mere scrap of paper. According to The Hague Convention, "private property may not be confiscated," and "pillage is expressly forbidden." A conquering belligerent may levy the usual taxes for the administration of the occupied territory, but any further levy "shall only be for the needs of the Army." This is a vague expression, but it has been understood to mean the immediate expenses of any troops quartered for the moment in any district. Germany's interpretation was very different. From Liége, stricken with shot and shell, she demanded £2,000,000. Brussels, with her ruined industries,

must pay £8,000,000. The province of Brabant, black with smouldering hamlets, must raise £18,000,000. Lille was assessed for £280,000. The figure for Amiens was £40,000, and for Roubaix and Tourcoing, £40,000. Even Louvain, a charred skeleton of its former self, must find £4000. In six weeks no less a sum than £28,000,000 was demanded, in the main, from territory the invasion of which was, according to Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg himself, a wrongful act. The crowning exaction was a levy of £25,000,000 on Antwerp, already bombarded and emptied both of trade and of inhabitants. The picture of the Prussian officer entering some town, threatening the people with instant bombardment if they do not produce their cash-boxes, sitting there in the market-place, while the already impoverished inhabitants produce their last cherished coins, and finally removing himself and his troops with their booty, as nearly complete as possible—this picture is not of war, as Germany at The Hague pledged herself to define war. If a collection had to be made, it must only be “effected in accordance, as far as is possible, with the legal basis and assessment of taxes in force at the time,” and a receipt must be given. What Germany inflicted was the brigandage which, one hundred years earlier, aroused Europe to declare Napoleon Buonaparte an outlaw.

We may give another illustration of the new warfare. Aeroplanes and Zeppelins, especially the former, were regarded as the eyes of the armies

which they served. They were scouts sent forth to spy out the land. At The Hague Convention an attempt was made to secure the prohibition of bomb-throwing from aircraft, but it was unsuccessful. Still, there were the general laws, to which Germany was a party, forbidding "the bombardment, by any means whatever, of undefended towns, villages, dwellings, or buildings," while, "except in cases of assault," notice of bombardment must be given, in order to enable women and children to find such refuge as they can. It may be said that at Liége, Namur, Antwerp, and Paris, where bombs were dropped, the cities were not undefended. Still, this was only a technical mitigation of what humanity regarded as a wanton crime. The bombs were directed, frankly, not at fortifications, but at civilian quarters. The object was not war, but terrorism, and it was mistaken terrorism. Such methods never have beaten down, and never will beat down, the unconquerable spirit of man. The more ruthless the invader, the more desperate is likely to be the resistance which greets him. What was really gained when a missile from the heavens mutilated beyond description a non-combatant tradesman of Namur? How did it help Germany to cause, from a height of 10,000 feet, what was in reality an anarchist outrage within a few yards of the residences of the Prince of Monaco and the Spanish Ambassador, in the Avenue du Trocadero in Paris?

It will be noted that we confine ourselves to deeds for which the German Government was

directly responsible. The Emperor William cannot have been ignorant of the attempt over Antwerp to slay by one premeditated stroke the entire royal family of Belgium. Night was chosen as the most suitable time for this unusual feat of arms. The King and Queen, the little Princes, and the Princess Marie-José would be sleeping in the Palais du Roi, unaware of the atrocious doom prepared for them. In the ruins of their adopted home they would be mutilated and overwhelmed. The dynasty would be extinguished. Germany would step in and graciously fill the vacant sovereignty.

The Belgian Queen was a Princess of Bavaria, but this was not the consideration to which this courageous lady owed her life. The bombs were aimed, first at the Palace, then at the Law Courts, the Bourse, the Bank, and the Minerva Motor Works. Although seven persons were killed, and a score of others injured, the objective was in every case missed. The Queen and her children were able to escape to England, and the dynasty was preserved. But the attempt on their lives, directed as it was by the Emperor's Government, created a deep impression. King Albert had played an heroic part. In earlier years he had resolutely cleaned up the Augean stables, which he inherited, both at Brussels and on the Congo, from his infamous uncle, Leopold. To single out his family and his home for special attack was not war, but assassination ; and nowhere was resentment more outspoken than in the United States. That indig-

nation was hardly allayed by an endeavour to drop a bomb on President Poincaré, and there was even greater surprise at Germany's wilfulness in planting an infernal machine on the unfortified roof of *Nôtre-Dame*. Even Sandringham did not escape. In January 1915 a scarcely veiled threat against the life of the English Royal Household was perpetrated by Zeppelins amid the plaudits of Berlin, while at an earlier date special care had been taken to destroy the village and patrimony of the French President.

It was not until the 23rd of September, weeks after these outrages began, that Great Britain retaliated. A flight of aeroplanes visited Düsseldorf and shelled the Zeppelin shed. In an article, apparently inspired, *The Times* told the German Emperor that his whereabouts in Luxembourg were known, and that, in Churchillian phrase, "there cannot for ever be one law for civilised nations and another law for Germany." The raid on Düsseldorf was "an admonition," and, in that city—this was a very bitter touch—there were thirty-seven churches, and they were all intact. Also, Cologne Cathedral, only 20 miles away, remained untouched.

For London, the war in the air brought a sudden and a symbolic darkness. By order of Lord Kitchener, sky-signs and arc-lamps, indeed, all the innocent illumination of shops and picture-shows, were blotted out. Streets that in peace blazed at nightfall with a glare that reached the clouds were now scarcely distinguishable from a

secondary shopping lane in an economical country market town. Searchlights slowly waved vast arms in the air, but found nothing. And other precautions were taken. Without entering into details, we may assume not only that the map of London was cleverly disguised, but that there were preparations for receiving the aerial visitors with warm reprisals. In October, when the lights first fell, the number of street fatalities, already large, was doubled. Scores of civilians were crushed and broken as an indirect result of the still distant aerial menace.

## CHAPTER VII

### FROM LOUVAIN TO RHEIMS

THE utterances of the German Emperor and the proclamations of his Generals were translated by the German troops into deed and fact. The desolation of Belgium was due not to any indiscipline of the soldiers, a few of whom to their honour deplored the orders which they had to fulfil, but to a system of strategy, carefully thought out and frankly avowed. Luxembourg had not resisted the German advance. When involved in the general ruin, Luxembourg therefore was promised compensation, while her Grand Duchess, a prisoner of State, was graciously offered a Prussian medal. But of Belgium an example must be made which would for all time terrorise those small and still independent states, like Denmark, Switzerland, and Holland, who were the trembling neighbours of Germany. On three occasions was Belgium invited to be reasonable. Before a shot had been fired, General von Emmich made his overtures. A few days later the Emperor, disturbed by the carnage before Liége, invited the mediation of the Queen of Holland, even promising

to Belgium some increase in territory. Thirdly, when King Albert had been driven into Antwerp, a further offer was made, as preliminary to strict investment. To her obligations as a guaranteed kingdom, Belgium remained true, and she was punished accordingly.

The war had not been in progress for a week before Germany, in her own way, announced her campaign against non-combatants. A *communiqué* of unmistakable significance was issued from Berlin. It was alleged that France and Belgium were "organising popular war," to be waged not by soldiers wearing uniform, but by civilians. "If," said the German Government, "the war assumes a brutal character, it will be the fault of France and Belgium, not Germany." The accusation was untrue. The German troops had not as yet seriously entered France. Both the allied Governments, with their municipalities, had steadily disarmed the non-combatant population, and had inculcated submission to the invaders. Although by the rules of The Hague, Belgium had a right to employ her Garde Civique, that force, so far as it was stationed around Brussels, was disbanded. It was not France and Belgium, but Germany herself who chiefly abused the rule that belligerents must wear their own uniform and refrain from firing treacherously. On many occasions, German detachments gained a dubious advantage by clothing themselves in uniforms stripped from the dead and dying enemy. At Liège, the gallant General Leman was nearly

murdered by two officers thus disguised as French, who paid the penalty of their offence with their lives. Motor-cars, manned by German combatants clad in civilian clothes, scoured the country, sparing neither sentries nor women and children. Even if, in certain cases, other combatants did the same, it was not for Germany to assume the garb of special correctitude in this particular respect.

The *communiqué* was quickly followed by an interesting appointment. The Military Governor selected for the occupied provinces of Belgium was the aged and eminent authority on modern war, Field-Marshal Freiherr von der Goltz. His had been a varied career. In 1883 he had been lent by his Imperial Master to the Sultan Abdul Hamid, with whom to the end the Hohenzollerns maintained the cordial intimacy of kindred spirits. The distinguished officer was set to reorganise the Turkish Army, and if he failed, the responsibility lies not with him, but with the officials who tied his hands. One of his masterpieces was the great fortress of Adrianople. The oppression of Macedonia and the butchery of Armenians showed that the soldiery of the Ottoman Empire understood what is meant by a military precaution against the hostility of civilians. In Belgium, von der Goltz had a free hand. He was no longer frustrated, whether by Asiatic incapacity or by the scruples of European diplomacy. A few days after his arrival in Brussels there occurred a prompt act of which Abdul, had he known, would

have cordially approved. Louvain was sacked and burnt. The Emperor William, with a tenderer conscience than the Mussulman, declared after the event that his heart bled for Louvain. So keen was his distress that, after a decent interval, he invited an independent Swedish lawyer to discover why the crime had been committed. But the bleeding heart of the Emperor failed to save Dinant and other cities from a fate not less appalling than that which overtook the University Town.

At the outset there seems to have been some attempt by the Germans to conciliate the Belgian peasantry. For the first twenty-four hours, money was offered when supplies were requisitioned. But the farmers were ungrateful. Von Emmich complained that they were behaving badly. The women, particularly, refused to be amenable to the well-meant attentions of the soldiers. A casual eye-witness described the great military machine, horse, foot, and artillery, rolling forward over the slopes, and the well-equipped cavalry treading down the ripe corn of the strangely unappreciative countryside. In the midst of the host walked a melancholy group of villagers, their heads bent, their hands bound behind their backs, and their fate unknown. On the 5th of August the clear sky was overclouded with the smoke of burning farms. Visé, on the Meuse, was in flames. Argenteau, hard by, had ceased to exist. The roads to Holland were black with fugitives. Unarmed non-combatants lay wantonly slain.

It was alleged that civilians fired on the soldiers. To an army in the field, such sniping is the last word in provocation. The British forces in South Africa had in the end to burn any farm from which shots were fired. The Russians, in East Prussia, fixed a tariff. For the first offence, the guilty house was burnt; for a second, the street. Germany was content with nothing less than a village, a University, or a Cathedral. Her armies were furnished not only with cannon and commissariat, field hospitals, and pontoon bridges. The equipment also included fire engines of a new design, by which petrol could be conveniently sprayed upon buildings doomed to destruction. All was planned in advance, according to a well-understood and scientific method. When a city was destroyed, photographers were allowed free access to the smoking ruins. Every nation on the face of the earth was invited to contemplate the bare and blackened walls, the deserted streets, the roofless churches, which testified to German efficiency. In fairness, it should be added that as a mark of deference to the officers the most comfortable restaurants were as a rule reverently spared.

It is doubtful whether in Germany's own interests this policy was wise. The Cossacks were advancing on her eastern frontier. "Dear, good German friends," so wrote a Dutch journalist, "we weep for wonderful Louvain, we weep for the Belgians, but we weep still more for you. If the Russians in the north-east of Germany were

now to take vengeance, a town for a town and a peasant for a peasant—why, it would be terrible for the whole civilised world, and the very thought makes us shudder. But you, what would you be able to say ? ” The severity could only be defended, if at all, on two assumptions : first, that the alleged sniping was persisted in despite all less ferocious deterrents ; and secondly, that the Germans themselves refrained from provocation. Neither plea could be sustained. Here and there a few shots were doubtless fired by civilians, but they were the isolated acts of foolish, though deeply wronged, men. For what did civilians gain by remaining peaceable ? They were as much exposed to risk of murder and to loss of goods as if they had sold their lives dearly. Along country roads, pedestrians and cyclists who happened to meet patrols of Uhlans were shot at sight. After six weeks of war it was reckoned that for every Belgian soldier who had lost his life in battle, the invaders had slaughtered three unarmed non-combatants.

We have mentioned the women praying in the churches. They had need to pray. In all wars, the women suffer insult. In this war, the ill-treatment of women was an important element in the invaders’ strategy. At Liège and other cities the military authorities issued the abominable order that all doors must be left unlocked, whether by day or by night, and that domiciliary visits at any hour were to be accepted without resistance. The behaviour of the German soldiery was such

that the British Government were compelled to limit the number of Red Cross nurses sent to the front, while German nurses were armed by their own Government with revolvers. One incident, typical, it is to be feared, of many others, was the subject of an indignant cartoon in *Punch*. At Aerschot, on the 19th of August, between six and eight in the morning, a German force advanced, driving before it four women, with babies in their arms, and two little girls, clinging to their skirts. Wounded, bereaved, and homeless, these miserable survivors could still fulfil one function. They could shield their tormentors from the bullets of the Belgian troops.

Some of the tragedies would have been avoided if the Prussian officers had not displayed that strange touchiness which not long before the war had provoked the affair at Zabern. Here were men who spent their lives looking for salutes. At hotels, unhappy the waiter who failed to serve them first. A hint of ridicule drove them to fury. The child of tender years, who dared to laugh, who pointed his wooden gun at the man who was in fact as well as by race his enemy, or who—worst offence of all at three years old—called “Vive l’Angleterre,” was instantly butchered. It was less an act of war than a disclosure of psychology, and the occurrence was not even regarded as regrettable. The British authorities picked up a little book entitled *Kriegs-Chronik*, which was written by Germans for Germans. It contains a number of letters from the front, praising the

exploits of the troops. One soldier tells with unblushing candour how a Belgian village has been burnt, and *all* the men massacred. Another describes how a German dragoon pretended to surrender, and so shot a French sergeant through the brain. It was "a bold little stroke by cavalry." A third incident in the Vosges is thus narrated :

"A traitor has just been shot, a little French lad (*Ein Französling*) belonging to one of those gymnastic societies which wear tricolour ribbons (*i.e.* the *Eclaireurs* or Boy Scouts), a poor young fellow, who in his infatuation wanted to be a hero. The German column was passing along a wooded defile, and he was caught and asked whether the French were about. He refused to give information. Fifty yards farther on there was fire from the cover of a wood. The prisoner was asked in French if he had known that the enemy was in the forest, and did not deny it. He went with firm step to a telegraph post and stood up against it, with the green vineyard at his back, and received the volley of the firing party with a proud smile on his face. Infatuated wretch ! It was a pity to see such wasted courage."

In palliation of the above incident, it was alleged that *Französling* signifies, not a little French lad, but an Alsatian of French extraction. But the point of the anecdote lies rather in the zest with which it is told.

It was soon apparent that the task assigned to von der Goltz was far more than the mere protection of lines of communication. Belgium was informed that she must now regard herself as a part of the German Confederation. Her post

offices were Prussianised, and special postage stamps issued. The city of Bruxelles was renamed Bruessels. The Emperor was particularly insistent on the acceptance of German coinage as legal tender, and the clocks were all reset to German time. And there is a delightful story of a registrar on the Meuse who declined to certify the birth of a child until French names had been changed for others ending in -helm and -rich. When, one by one, the towns and villages of a thriving country sank into dust and ashes, the civic halls were preserved as useful landmarks around which other towns and villages, thoroughly Prussianised, might arise. If a famous edifice like the Church of St. Rombaud at Malines was wrecked by bombardment, the world was consoled with the assurance that the Germans would soon erect something finer. An American newspaper retorted that such a restoration would be a greater calamity than the original destruction.

In order to complete the proposed subjugation it was necessary to dig out, once for all, this obstinate king, his garrison in Antwerp, and his miserable government. While the great guns were drawn across the country, certain other preliminaries to annexation were completed. If Belgium had retained her thriving population, wealthy, patriotic, and of the Catholic faith, it might not have been possible even for Prussia to hold her down. By a simple administrative act, a large area, completely evacuated by the Belgian forces, was laid waste. Day and night the hamlets

and homesteads burned. The peasants, who began by touching their hats to the Germans, ended by throwing up their arms in a frenzy of despair whenever they caught sight of the hated helmet. Hither and thither the refugees drifted, sometimes returning like crazed men to their houses, now gutted and pillaged, sometimes drifting over water to Folkestone and England. Thousands were killed outright. Other thousands were to be claimed by the hard hand of winter.

The Belgian headquarters were situated at Louvain. It was a richly endowed and ancient university town with 42,000 inhabitants. Some of its wealth had been won from the Congo, and some of its wisdom had been harnessed to the degrading task of defending the Concessions in that region. Still there was a desire that, like Ghent, Bruges, and Brussels, Louvain, despite this lapse from disinterested scholarship, should escape the destructions of battle and of siege. It was an open town, without modern fortifications, and it was evacuated by the Belgians without a struggle. The Germans made terms with the Burgomaster. There were to be no war contributions. Soldiers, not billeted on private individuals, were to pay cash for all goods obtained, and the inhabitants were to live without molestation. On these conditions the town was to provide for the invaders.

We can readily understand that a University like Louvain, feeding as it would do the flame of Belgian nationalism, would have been, like other universities in conquered provinces, a great em-

barrassment to the Government at Berlin. As Irishmen were quick to remember, Louvain was a home of Catholic learning, and the war had already revealed the animus of Prussia against priests. One unhappy cleric was shot because in his private diary he had entered a note of regret over Germany's conduct of the war in Belgium. Another suffered the same fate because he printed a plea that Louvain should not be destroyed. In one French province alone, seven clergy were killed, and it is certain that scores of their Belgian brethren suffered the same fate. Still, Louvain held to her bargain, and, despite all provocation, peace was for some days preserved. The officers imposed repeated exactions, both in money and in kind, and the people complained of insults, but there was no open rupture.

About the events of the 26th of August there is a certain mystery. The Germans removed from the hospitals their sick and wounded, including their Red Cross nurses. Field pieces and cannon were placed in position. For a day and a night the gasworks had been kept going, and there was thus no fear of inhabitants escaping under cover of darkness. Valuable pictures were taken from the churches and packed up, for transmission to Berlin, where, some weeks later, the director of art treasures declared on his conscience that all the booty of this kind had only been removed for safety, and would be, of course, returned. At six o'clock a bugle sounded, and officers stationed in private houses slipped away with their belong-

ings. By the rules of the military authorities, all inhabitants must be within doors by eight o'clock, and it was immediately after this hour, when the people had been isolated from the soldiery, that the trouble began. The statement of the Germans is that the people fired on the soldiers. The Belgian answer is that the people had been disarmed for days, had maintained complete quiet, had anxiously decorated their houses with white flags, and that, if there was firing at all, it was by German soldiers either mistaking their own comrades for the enemy or deliberately re-entering the houses to discharge their weapons from windows, so as to create trouble. An awful scene ensued. Street by street, the troops fired the houses. The offending university, with its churches, its colleges, and its incomparable library, was consigned to the flames. The Hôtel de Ville alone survived, a monument of beauty, raising its pinnacles and high-pitched roof amid the irretrievable chaos.

The terrified inhabitants rushed into the streets. Massacre, on a scale absolutely unprecedented in modern warfare, awaited old and young, man, woman, and child. Hundreds perished in cellars, their homes burning over their heads. "The last thing I heard," so wrote a Dutch gentleman, who, by announcing his nationality, escaped, "was a German soldier boasting that he had shot sixty-three people dead." The sabre, the bayonet, the rifle, and the machine gun were all inflicted on the doomed community. Nero himself was never

so equipped. The dead lay in attitudes of inconceivable horror, and—a typical scene amid the destruction—two children were seen making their way, hand in hand, across the corpses. For a crime so startling, there had to be not pretexts alone, but culprits. They were discovered by the arrest of fifty persons, who, protesting innocence, were shot down in batches, men and women, till all were laid low. Even the decencies of burial were neglected. Days later, the bodies lay unattended, while of those which were allowed a resting-place, many were left imperfectly concealed by their mother earth.

The sequel was scarcely less atrocious. For the survivors of that infernal night no pity was shown. Men and women were separated. Scores of them—ninety to a vehicle—were herded in horse trucks, deep with filth, and hurried away by train to Cologne. For fifty hours they had to stand, with the doors shut and in a fetid atmosphere. At Cologne these burgesses, men of all social grades, were exposed to the angry insults of a crowd that called for their execution. They were then returned without food to Brussels, a journey of two days and three nights. At Brussels a little food was smuggled through the windows, but when at Malines the prisoners were discharged, they fell ravenously to eating what beetroot they could tear from the fields. Ruined in body, in mind, and in estate, they drifted to Ghent, Bruges, and Ostend. To the horrors of Lucknow and Cawnpore had been added for these men an

experience comparable with the Black Hole of Calcutta. Neither then nor later did the perpetrators of these deeds offer an apology. So far from realising the condemnation of public opinion, the officers encouraged the photographer, and themselves posed, seated complacently, at the festive table of a restaurant, which remained intact amid the crime. Afterwards, with no less complacence, Louvain was exhibited in all its nakedness to the diplomatic representatives of Spain and the United States, who were invited to hear shots fired from the shattered windows of the deserted town !

Lest the infamy should be incomplete, there was added a form of mental torture not unknown to the Inquisition itself. Seventy-four men were separated from their wives, arrested, and hurried into a village church. At four o'clock next morning they were advised to make confession as in half an hour they would be shot. It was a jest ; for at half-past four they were liberated and forced to march towards Malines in front of the German troops. There they were released, though in what mental condition may be better imagined than described.

Louvain was not the only city sacrificed to the proposed subjugation of a free people. Termonde was utterly blotted out, its houses reduced to bare walls, its streets to an avenue of smoking sepulchres. The fate of Dinant was perhaps most tragic of all. So delightful a haunt of pleasure-seekers, with only 8000 inhabitants, and a citadel,

as picturesque as it was antiquated, might surely have been overlooked. Lying sheltered in its valley, Dinant had escaped the ruin which usually overtakes a town when it is the centre of fierce battles. It was not in any action of war that the triple spires of her thirteenth-century church, with their bulbous contour, vanished in a tongue of flame. The tide of conflict had already rolled westwards, and Dinant was to learn, not what is meant by war alone, but also what is meant by war, waged as revenge. There is no dispute as to the essential facts. In the evening an armoured motor-car entered the town, and the occupants of the car fired at the houses, killing a woman and child. A man and his wife looked from their door into the street and were promptly done to death. Next day the main body of troops arrived and the work of butchery was undertaken in earnest. Sixty unarmed cotton workers, hidden in a drain, were discovered and killed. About forty brewery hands, old and young, were found in a cellar and dispatched. Two hundred men and lads, of all ages, were gathered in the Place d'Armes and shot wholesale by machine gun. The women, dragged half naked from their beds, were imprisoned for three days in a convent, without food. The town was then burned to the ground. Families, taking refuge in cellars, perished in the flames. Since the churches were consumed, religion itself furnished no sanctuary. And at the end of this astounding military operation the photographers, as at Louvain, furnished the world with admirable views

of all that was left. "The monster who presided over these abominable atrocities," so wrote an indignant Belgian, "was Lieutenant-Colonel Beeger."

The story would be frankly incredible if it were not one of a number equally attested. The world still remembers the Koepenick case. It revealed the German Army as a machine, perfect in its parts, yet totally devoid of individual discretion, which a bogus officer could without let or hindrance set in motion. The burning of Dinant and the butchery of the people, which seemed to the world a somewhat exaggerated offence against the laws of God and man, were to the German officers merely a matter of routine, fully provided for in the text-books. At Compiègne, the Commandant of the March issued a proclamation containing these paragraphs :

"*Any action prejudicial to the German Army, the installation of public communications, railroads, telegraphs, and telephones will be severely punished, no matter whether committed by persons of male or feminine sex.*

"*The commune where such crimes take place will be exposed to similar punishment. The communes will be responsible for the criminals, and will have to bear the most severe punishments.*

"*Any criminal, male or feminine, caught in the act will be immediately shot.*

"*Any locality, where persons of the German Army are traitorously wounded, poisoned, or killed, will be immediately burnt.*

"*Any attempt will incur the same punishment."*

These were not empty threats, but military

orders, undoubtedly prepared, like the petrol-sprayers, in advance of the war. Mrs. Bonar, wife of a city merchant, was escaping through the Belgian village of Baelen-Dolhain. The party heard firing. She ran from the house and found herself in front of the troops. She saw a customs house officer, M. Blaise, shot down and killed. Mr. Mackenzie, her acquaintance, joined her. "For God's sake," cried Mrs. Bonar, "don't shoot that man. He is an Englishman merely taking refuge here." "Das macht nichts aus" (that does not matter), replied the officer, and Mr. Mackenzie fell dead. Mrs. Bonar was convinced that the officer perfectly understood what was said to him. Her narrative is clear, and at first hand. It was typical. "They shot my husband before my eyes," said a peasant woman, who had escaped from Tirlemont to Brussels, "and they trampled two of my children to death. I am the mother of nine, and I have only five with me. Two others are lost." It was the common story.

The case of Kalisch, in Russian Poland, was similar. The treatment of Poland by the Czars had been so harsh that, on the outbreak of hostilities, a revolution at Warsaw was among the possibilities. News came through that one of the arsenals in that city of strategic importance had been "struck by lightning," but in a few days the real sympathies of Poland were unmistakably revealed. No stepmother is popular, but of the three claimants to that relationship, Russia was decisively preferred to Austria and to Germany.

In language of Oriental exuberance the Czar, through his Commander-in-Chief, the Grand Duke Nicholas, undertook to grant self-government to a reunited kingdom. Cynics might observe that no such promise was extended to Finland, which lay beyond the seat of war, but even Finland remained unquestionably loyal. Prussia learnt, therefore, to her regret that internal dissensions within the territories of her opponent were not among the factors on which she could count. The Kaiser's troops entered Kalisch, not as deliverers, but as bent upon imposing a yoke, regarded as far more humiliating than the Russian regime. The city was no sooner occupied than it was annexed. It was no sooner annexed than it was bombarded and destroyed. A few random shots had doubtless been fired from windows at the German troops. Scores of leading citizens were compelled, therefore, to lie, face downward in the dust, for one hour and a half. This expiation over, the soldiers withdrew, and Kalisch breathed freely again. The momentary evacuation was only a prelude to a rain of shot and shell. For days it continued. The people fled for their lives or huddled in cellars. Machine guns swept the streets. Hostages were dragged into Prussia. The diabolical jest, with which we are already familiar, namely, the threat of death when liberation is at hand, was played upon them. Kalisch is to-day virtually destroyed, an Eastern Louvain. If one case stood alone, one might refuse belief ; but when witnesses, separated by a thousand

miles, of diverse language, race, and faith, independently testify to the same unusual phenomena, so that, save for unimportant details, their stories could be interchanged, one discovers, not an act of excess, not a momentary aberration, but a deliberate challenge against the life of mankind. A German who kills innocent children, burns down nunneries, stables his horses before the High Altar, outrages women, breaks into houses at night, pillages, or insults—this German commits no offence. A Belgian, Frenchman, or Russian who in his own country interferes in any way, however slight, with these strategic operations, is a criminal, to be shot without mercy and without trial.

The Prussian authorities were not unaware of the horror produced by these acts. The whole world protested. No other nation, making war, claimed this liberty to exterminate. Americans, stationed at Vera Cruz, had suffered much from sniping, but Vera Cruz still stands. Situated in disturbed Mexico, it was more fortunate than a dozen towns, than scores of villages, of Western Europe. When these things were pointed out, Prussia remained entirely unrepentant. Her answer was rather some new act of peculiar atrocity. Hitherto, no example had been made of any city in France. The omission was speedily rectified, and the town of Senlis was found to be convenient for the purpose. It was in the neighbourhood of Paris. It was not too large, and it boasted a Cathedral. A motor-car, passing the French lines with papers forged at Amiens, dashed

through Senlis, as through Dinant, firing as it went. A sentry lay dead. The Germans followed in force, and two soldiers entered a tobacconist's shop. "I serve men, not bullies," was the unfortunate remark into which the tradesman was betrayed. He clenched his fist and struck one of the Germans in the chest. The tobacconist was unarmed. Dragged from his counter, he was thrown into the street. His wife rushed out, shrieking for mercy. One shot settled the man; a second shot showed that the woman also was not forgotten. It is to be feared that the evil-disposed people of Senlis did, after this, fire certain bullets at the German soldiers, one of whom was wounded. A few hours later, the Mayor, held as a hostage, was executed. The guns were then trained on the defenceless town. Men, women, and children were hammered with bursting projectiles. The flames rose, higher and higher, until from Chantilly, seven kilometres away, the smoke could be seen, rising to heaven, and blotting out the sky. So perished the town of Senlis.

An inevitable result of these proceedings was that the crime of pillaging, strictly forbidden both by the rules of The Hague and by the orders of Lord Kitchener, was habitually committed by the German troops. If a house was to be burnt, why not save the valuables for some pleasant home in the Fatherland? Wagons full of valuables wended their way slowly eastwards. Where there was no time to secure the booty, the soldiers in many places wilfully destroyed what they could not

carry away. Mirrors would be smashed, house linen trodden under foot, and furniture wrecked. At a music dealer's store there would be a concert, led by gramophones and pianolas. When the festivity was over, the stock, worth a large sum of money, was smashed to atoms. It is even stated that the Crown Prince himself took the lead in these disgraceful proceedings. He stayed at the Château of the Baroness de Baye, near Champeaubert. The lady alleges that he entered the chapel, tore down the portraits of the Czar and Czarina, and trod them under foot. The collections of M. de Baye, including the Czar's gifts to him, were ransacked, and the most valuable of them stolen. Armour, jewels, vases, medals, ikons, tapestries, medallions—all the best of the treasures were selected for this princely theft. In one or two quarters, Germany made a half-hearted protest against the publication of the charges, but the Baroness stoutly held her ground. There was an interesting sequel. The Crown Princess of Prussia and prospective Empress of Germany was a daughter of the House of Meeklenburg-Schwerin. Her mother was a Grand Duchess of Russia and a cousin of the Czar. A few days after the events<sup>7</sup> of Champeaubert she renounced her German nationality and title and returned to her maiden style. It was a spirited comment upon the conduct of her august son-in-law.

The tale was still incomplete. Some striking achievement must, as it were, focus the attention of the nations on Prussian culture and Prussian reverence. The Cathedral at Malines had been

repeatedly shelled, and its stained glass destroyed. At Rheims there stood an even more illustrious shrine. For centuries war and revolution had surged around that incomparable basilica, but hitherto no hand had been so daring as to aim a felon blow at a building so ancient, so tenderly beautiful, and so crowded with memories. Over Rheims Cathedral brooded the spirit of Joan of Arc ; and this was the spirit which Prussia was engaged in striking down to dust. From the ancient and lofty towers there waved a Red Cross Flag. The church itself was filled with German wounded, and we need not doubt that the French hoped from this circumstance some protection for the edifice which they held in trust for all mankind. But the Red Cross Flag and the presence of their wounded had ceased to restrain the thunder of Prussia's artillery. By a decision, obviously deliberate and sanctioned by high authority, the guns were trained on the Cathedral, on the Red Cross Flag, on the German wounded, and on the French nurses who were nobly tending them. Shells burst ; altars were rent ; tombs were broken ; soaring tracery collapsed ; pinnacles and gargoyles crashed downwards into the streets ; and scaffolding, itself a witness to the care with which France, under disestablishment, had been restoring the edifice, caught fire. A sheet of flame wrapped the towers and roof, calcining the sculpture and utterly obliterating priceless woodwork. Despite the provocation, the German wounded were not deserted. The improvised hospital was

hastily removed into the streets, and when the infuriated crowd came forward to lynch the helpless men a priest stood forth and, with uplifted hand, warned his fellow-countrymen against sharing in Prussia's sin. The prisoners were saved.

The bombardment of Rheims may not have been a worse deed than a hundred others in this war. It was the act of an army smarting under losses and baffled by enemies which could be no longer despised. The towers, it was pleaded, were used for observation ; troops moved behind the Cathedral. The excuses only aggravated the indignation which spread, far and wide. The Pope himself said nothing, but, from the Vatican, issued the ominous opinion that for such crimes vengeance belongeth not to man. To the average German, the destruction of so beautiful a church did not seem to be a matter of great importance. It was an offence against the Fatherland that noble art should be cherished unless that art be German. The glory of French architecture was galling to Prussian pride as was the glory of the British Empire. The same impulse was directed against both. And there was a deeper significance even than this in the act which was so generally regarded as sacrilegious. German theology had broken with the ancient Christian faith, and hated every expression of it. Ruskin had foreseen the situation, and prophesied the peril to the stones he loved. But from the dust-heaps was unearthed a still more startling forecast, by a German, Heine himself, who wrote :

“Christianity—and this is its highest merit—has in some degree softened, but it could not destroy, that brutal German joy of battle. When once the taming talisman, the Cross, breaks in two, the savagery of the old fighters, the senseless Berserker fury of which the northern poets sing and say so much, will gush up anew. That talisman is decayed, and the day will come when it will piteously collapse. Then the old stone gods will rise from the silent ruins, and rub the dust of a thousand years from their eyes. Thor, with his giant’s hammer, will at last spring up and shatter to bits the Gothic cathedrals.”

Thus was foreshadowed the new anti-Christianity.

## CHAPTER VIII

### BRUSSELS AND ANTWERP

So, as we have endeavoured to describe, was this modern world, confident in its emancipation from the fetters of faith and dogma, now suddenly confronted with an elemental fact—the devastation of Belgium and of north-eastern France. The most heedless of men, wherever he lived, had to ask himself if it was prudent for nations to eliminate from their affairs those qualities of truth, of law, and of respect for the weak, without which society dissolves. Doubtless it was true that in civil life a prisoner, charged with arson or murder, is only convicted when the evidence, as sifted by cross-examination, is found to be conclusive. There was no tribunal before which European Armies could be arraigned. War correspondents, who might have produced independent testimony, were excluded from the firing line. No correspondent, however veracious, would readily act as informer against compatriot troops whose hospitality and protection he was enjoying. He would say to himself that, after all, if there were excesses on one side, there had also been excesses on the

other side. No one could state with any certainty whether the miseries of Belgium would not be matched by calamities, as terrible, in East Prussia and the Serbian seat of war. In any case, the censors would black out inconvenient disclosures, and a newspaper which criticised the conduct of friendly troops would quickly find itself without either readers or advertisers. Yet, despite every reservation, the Belgian indictment stood. The deeds were done in the full light of publicity. Berlin produced no Disraeli to dismiss the business as mere coffee-house babble. A German officer, whose elaborate diary fell into the hands of the British, wrote with laconic candour of shooting two hundred civilians at the village of Leppe, and admitted that no attempt was made to distinguish between the guilty and the innocent. He described the looting and vandalism of his comrades—indeed, was distressed at the wanton destruction of French furniture, but, when visiting a home so ravaged, he could not himself resist the temptation to pick up a little camera “for Felix.” The very stones themselves cried out, while the German answer was not that the acts alleged against her were apocryphal or exaggerated or even lawful, but that, by a special Providence, Germany was uplifted above the law.

It may well be that what impressed the public was the extent of the destruction, not the still greater extent of those areas which were preserved. Even in Louvain there were buildings which escaped the fire, and people who survived the

sword. But in other respects the picture was underdrawn. The military authorities could not be expected to favour the publication of narratives which would reveal to the people at home the full horror of war, not merely as war was waged by Germans, but as war must be waged by any country. The whole truth might, if revealed, discourage recruiting. It would certainly undermine the public opinion which supports armies and navies. For hundreds of miles the country-side was scarred with shrapnel and scored with blood-sodden trenches. For days, indeed weeks, dead men and dead horses remained unburied. The autumnal air reeked with sickening odours. There, most uncanny sight, might one see corpses, still leaning stiffly against deserted earthworks, as if ever marking a vanished enemy. Hundreds of dead bodies, heaped together as part of the day's work, would share one funeral pyre. To the women at home, who prayed for these men and depended on them as breadwinners, casualty lists came tardily, while in Berlin, beflagged for victory, and in Vienna, the widow and the orphan were requested to moderate their mourning. The censorship included *crêpe*.

Yet the dead were fortunate. No scandal that aroused the ire of Florence Nightingale approached in magnitude of suffering the breakdown of ambulance in Serbia and elsewhere. Stricken men lay for days in carts, in sheds, on the roadside, with their wounds ill-dressed and rapidly becoming septic—a piteous multitude, perishing of

delirium, of lockjaw, of gangrene. It was nobody's fault. The conflicts on the various fronts were on a scale for which it was impossible, at such short notice, to make preparations. There is hardly a doubt that on the German side the severely wounded were in certain instances dispatched, a crime against the rules hardly to be mentioned without execration. Yet if war be, as it is, the conquest of the weak by the strong, there is small reason, in strict logic, why the wounded should receive attention. Indeed, the man who, stricken with shrapnel, remembered that, as in Belgium, there was a shortage of chloroform, might be pardoned for beseeching his friends to end his ordeal with one last merciful bullet.

By the rules of war, as defined at The Hague, it is "particularly forbidden to employ arms, projectiles, or material calculated to cause unnecessary suffering." This is the famous formula which prohibits the use of dum-dum or soft-nosed bullets, which expand in the wound. On both sides, the doctors alleged that injuries which came under their observation were caused by these missiles. Germany declared roundly that the Allies issued such ammunition to their troops. Both the accused Powers repudiated the charge—Sir Edward Grey, with quiet finality, and President Poincaré, with convincing indignation. This last infamy of war is thus unproven and happily improbable. According to a *communiqué* issued in Germany, there are many wounds caused by broken metal which are hardly distinguishable

from the terrible injuries inflicted by dum-dum bullets. Moreover, any ill-disposed soldier may tamper with his cartridges. By rubbing or cutting their points he may change the form of his bullets, and his individual offence would in no way involve the honour of a Government. Still, the subject was not one to be lightly dismissed. The French Army included Turcos. The British forces were reinforced by Gurkhas, whose native knife had been adapted into a ghastly form of bayonet. There was a theory, held not in Berlin alone, that against Asiatic and African troops, when advancing, special ammunition is legitimate. Germany undoubtedly considered that the employment of these regiments against her was a kind of *lèse-majesté*, directed at the white man, who, in a European War, was under no obligation to allow quarter to combatants of colour. That was her view of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, and the only exception that she made was in favour of the Ottoman Army, which happened to be her ally. The use or non-use of dum-dum bullets by Germany thus involved the important principle that, in war as in peace, all kinds of human life should be regarded as equal, if not in economic value, at least in sacredness and spiritual dignity.

There is, happily, no evidence that poison was used as a weapon of slaughter. On this, as on other matters, rumour was, of course, busy. Early in August a French doctor was reported as shot on suspicion of infecting the water supply of Metz with germs of cholera. The crime, if it be a

fact, was singularly foolish, for Metz lay in Alsace Lorraine, and was, by anticipation, a French city, while cholera, if it scourges one army, quickly passes to another, whether friendly or hostile. On the retreat from the Marne, dead horses were said to have been found in wells, but this again must not be taken too seriously. War is always an untidy and desperate affair in which men lose their self-restraint. In English camps the doctors were constantly on guard against poisoned pills, medicated cigarettes, and unwholesome food. It was thought advisable to patrol the reservoirs which line the Thames Valley. Such incessant vigilance, assisted by the habitual cleanliness of the British soldier and by wholesale inoculations against typhoid, was rewarded by a singular freedom from disease. It was not until the war had been in progress for ten weeks that there was a first mention of typhoid and cholera. The infection began in areas occupied by Germany and Austria-Hungary.

In dealing with war, as a system, it is now impossible to ignore the grave mischief wrought by espionage. All the great Powers habitually make use of spies. It was left to Germany to push the business to the extreme conclusion. Her archives were swollen, not only with maps, plans, and designs, but with character sketches of Generals and gossip of all kinds. Her information was by no means always reliable. It is certain that her agents completely misunderstood Great Britain. They paid undue attention to the sound and fury

of our polities. They really imagined that, in Ulster, the Orangemen would invite the German Emperor to help the Loyalists against Mr. Redmond. They did not realise that the mere presence in this country of so many observant Germans put the Government on its guard. When war broke out, hundreds were arrested in London alone. Others were punished for keeping pigeons, carrying firearms, assisting conscripts to leave these shores, communicating with the enemy, failing to register themselves, transgressing the five-mile limit which was imposed on them, and other offences. "Shoot them," was the angry cry of certain members of the House of Commons, but for a time at any rate calmer counsels prevailed, and all that was asked of the alien enemy was that he should keep himself within the five-mile limit. Every allegation, furnished by individuals against individuals, was followed up by the police. More than eight thousand homes were raided, and in all cases documents were thoroughly examined. It was declared by the Home Office that there was no conspiracy to blow up railways, gas works, and Government offices. There were no arsenals hidden away in garden suburbs and other retired neighbourhoods. No case of outrage was brought home to an alien enemy, and a spy crusade, which added a certain inflammatory interest to an evening newspaper, was courteously suppressed by the Home Office. Indeed, so slight were the services rendered by the spies that, on as late a date as the 20th of August, the enemy only knew of the Expeditionary Force

as a rumour, and stated in an Army Order that its objective was probably Brussels.

Unfortunately for all that is wholesome in human relationships, the Press published stories which appeared to throw an ugly light upon the spy system. Some years before the war, certain land adjoining Maubeuge had been bought by Germans for the erection of a workshop. The foundations of this interesting edifice were laid in solid concrete, which, by a coincidence, served as an emplacement for heavy howitzers when Maubeuge came to be bombarded. In Paris, also, and at St. Mihiel on the Meuse, curious platforms of concrete were discovered. Near Dunkirk there were tennis-courts, of an unexceptionable pattern, and Willesden, near London, was startled one day by the arrest of Germans at a well-situated, one-storied factory, of singularly strong architecture for so innocent a trade as the one pursued. From this advantageous point all London, railways and cathedrals included, could on a clear day be seen. A somewhat similar erection made its appearance, singularly enough, near Rosyth, Edinburgh, and the Forth Bridge. And there were descriptions of a secret petrol store at Great Missenden for Zeppelins. It sounded like some fairy tale of the street corner—it may have been a fairy tale—but the statements were taken quite seriously by important persons, and, although their truth was afterwards at a considerable discount, they became part of the accepted gossip of war.

Germany cannot have been unaware of the popular anger which the stories of her gun platforms provoked. She offered neither denial nor explanation. Here was an allegation, not of espionage as ordinarily understood, for espionage is supposed to be limited to the pursuance of information. The laying of concrete was a definite act of war, a first step to the most dreaded of all military operations. It was, too, an act which, if the accounts were to be believed, was treacherously perpetrated under the guise of commerce in time of peace. This, at least, was the interpretation of the incident which obtained a wide publicity. The sequel was regrettable. In Deptford and other metropolitan districts, where already feeling was inflamed by sympathy with Belgian refugees, riots occurred in which the property of German tradesmen suffered severely. The ringleaders in the disturbances were frequently women who had sent son or husband to the front, and perhaps were mourning over bad news. Police and magistrates sternly repressed the trouble, which, however, broke out in a more orderly, though not more innocent, form. A section of the press demanded that all waiters and servants of enemy nationality be dismissed from hotels and restaurants. Hundreds of persons thus lost their livelihood. Some of them may possibly have picked up snatches of conversation from officers whom they served, but it may be doubted whether any scrap of valuable intelligence reached the enemy from these sources. If Lord Kitchener

had had fears on the subject, we may rest assured that "the retreat of the waiters" would have been effected weeks before a vigilant Press took up the matter. The agitators did not remember that, while many Germans were living in England, there were still some Englishmen living in Germany, so that harshness was a game at which two could play. It was months before an exchange of wounded, of women prisoners, and of certain male non-combatants, like the clergy, was arranged between Great Britain and Germany.

Deep as were the injuries inflicted by the German Government on France and Belgium, the above events made it clear that, when the full reckoning was made up, Germans themselves would pay by far the heaviest penalties. Here was a country which claimed to stand first among the nations in civilisation and culture. It was the only country in the world whose citizens hastened to change their names. Many of the families which thus disguised their origin were not only naturalised British subjects, but also British born and bred. Their young men served with the British Army and had been educated in the great public schools. Yet this does not alter the profound reflection on the prestige of Germany which is implied, when, wholesale, names like Auerbach, Blumenfeld, and Bussweiler become Arbour, Bloomfield, and Boswell. Meisner was changed into Milner, Oppenheim into Openshaw, Schumacher into Maitland, and Weiler into Welby. Such an escape from association with German methods

was possible enough for people who had made their permanent home in England. But the seventy millions of German subjects in Germany herself, and the other millions who carried on German trade abroad, could not hope for so blessed an oblivion. For these people the hints of espionage, the atrocities, and the entire policy thus symbolised were a disaster. The effects of the disclosures involved the highest in the land. The Royal Families of Europe were not many, but one. The Courts of England, Denmark, Germany, Bulgaria, Rumania, Greece, Sweden, Norway, and, in a less degree, of the other Powers, were related by close ties of blood. The war shattered this unity. The Duchess of Albany, as Queen Victoria's daughter-in-law, ranked as a British Princess. Her son, the Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, fought among the Prussians. Of two sons of Prince Christian, one died fighting for the King against the Boers, while the other took service against the King in the German Army. A Russian Grand Duke, whose wife had been, in other days, playmate of the Empress, was with his suite bundled across the frontier with as little ceremony as if he had been a peasant. A Danish Prince was arrested and searched as a common spy. Parliament seriously considered stopping British pensions to German royalties, at any rate until war was over. But the most startling of these events was the resignation of Prince Louis of Battenberg from the position of First Sea Lord, to which he had risen by zeal and ability. He had

two sons fighting in the Navy. His brother, Prince Henry, had married a daughter of Queen Victoria and had died for the Empire in the Ashantee War. Prince Henry's son, Maurice, was killed in action at the very moment when Prince Louis thought it well to resign. Prince Henry's daughter was Queen of Spain, and Portugal was already at war with Germany, through Germany's own aggression in Angola. Yet all these circumstances did not prevent ill-disposed persons remarking that Princess Louis of Battenberg was sister to Princess Henry of Prussia, while the Prince was of German birth, though long since naturalised. It was significant that on the day when his retirement became known, a Conference of London golf clubs decided, with scarcely a dissentient, that enemy aliens, even if long naturalised, should be suspended and if possible expelled from the society of that usually cosmopolitan fraternity.

The military argument for preparing the gun platforms was plausible rather than convincing. Such masses of material cannot be transported and do not set hard without delay, and, in war, time is often the decisive factor. In the secrecy of Essen, Messrs. Krupp had designed a new engine of attack. It was a howitzer, or rather a series of howitzers, of calibre that varied according to type from 8 inches to 16 inches, or thereabouts. Scores of horses and traction engines by the dozen were employed in dragging these cannon along the roads. The grip of the wheels was broadened

by caterpillar feet which overcame the difficulties of dust and mud. The projectiles were fired at a high angle. The largest of them was said to weigh a ton and to carry seven miles. It descended with a terrific impact. Indeed, the mere discharge of the gun was enough to render a man unconscious, and the special staff from Krupps, who alone could be entrusted with the weapon, retired to a respectful distance before they pressed the button. The strain of the convulsion on the ordnance was so great that the life of a gun was limited to a few rounds, say, a hundred. It was admitted by Lord Haldane that these mighty weapons came as a surprise to the Allied generals, and so delighted with the success was the German League for the Promotion of Industry, that it conferred a gold medal on Herr Krupp von Bohlen, whose firm had attained to "the highest point of all industrial achievement." Not until the spring of 1915 could the British Government claim that it had drawn level with Germany's heavy artillery.

By the original German plan, the invasion of France was to be effected by two armies proceeding on parallel lines, the one through Luxembourg and the other through Belgium. The passage of German troops through the Grand Duchy was not impeded, save by the motor-car of the Grand Duchess, whose girlish protests were quickly disposed of. The railways were already under German management, and on Sunday, the 2nd of August, the bridges were seized.

So far all went well with the invaders. When,

however, they sought to make use of the admirable railways which run from Aix-la-Chapelle through Liége and Namur into France, they discovered that the tunnels had been blown up, the bridges wrecked, and a Belgian Army gathered to defend the line of the Meuse. The Germans had underestimated the patriotism of their small neighbour. The Belgians were praised by Julius Cæsar as the bravest of warrior tribes, but at Waterloo this reputation was hardly sustained. It is, however, unsafe to write down a nation to the level of its past failures in war. Serbia, after the poorest record in Europe, fought three successful campaigns against the Turk, the Bulgar, and the Austrian. Greece, beaten to her knees in 1897, won victories over her old enemy in 1912. King Albert of Belgium proudly maintained that the mobilisation of his small army was "faultless." The manifesto of General von Emmich, appealing not very tactfully to memories of Waterloo, fell on deaf ears. Belgium threw herself into the conflict and hurled back with heavy loss two German Army Corps.

A worse mischance still was to follow. In an article but little considered at the time, Mr. Hilaire Belloc, who has the gift of visualising war, had drawn attention to Liége as one of the most perfect ring fortresses in Europe. At four miles' distance from the town, Brialmont had planted his forts in a circle. Where the mediæval castle towered aloft and seemed to dominate all who ventured to approach, these modern defences lay level with the ground. They could only be approached over

a vacant glacis, covered with sheet iron, and devoid of cover. Barbed wire and other obstacles impeded the storming parties. The artillery was roofed with armoured cupolas, from which all ordinary missiles glanced practically harmless. The turrets rose, fell, and revolved as on a warship ; and there were trenches from which, at close quarters, machine guns and the rifle could be directed against the enemy. Each fort had to be captured separately, and it was possible for the city within to be occupied while resistance continued, as obstinate as ever, in the surrounding defences.

General von Emmich ordered his men to carry the forts of Liége by storm. Trusting to the protection of night, his doomed battalions advanced in close formation. Under the revealing flash of searchlights thousands of helpless conscripts were mown down. Other thousands, with dogged courage, advanced across the bloodstained zone and were massacred like locusts. The dead and wounded lay in heaps, but the forts were scarcely touched. Hitherto, on entering battle, the soldier had enjoyed at least a seventy-five per cent. chance of life. He was now asked to face certain death. Most horrible fate of all, regiments were drawn by a ruse over ground heavily mined and, after their annihilation, their comrades were called upon to tramp over the exploded soil and its intermingling carnage. For the survivors the situation was aggravated by the dislocation of commissariat. The sudden check had thrown the lines of communication out of gear.

In Prussian tactics, such reckless sacrifice of life was no new thing. The theory at Berlin had always been that an army should contentedly lose a third of its men if the remaining two-thirds arrive at their objective. Such a subordination of the individual to the behests of the State was comparable only with the Paganism of Japan. At Port Arthur, as at Liége, the life of the individual was held to be of no account. There also, as throughout the war, were regiments shattered wholesale. The officer who failed had but one resource and one consolation. He could commit *hara-kiri*. Von Emmich likewise disappeared from the drama and, amid the medley of messages from the front, it was confidently reported that he shot himself.

Then it was that Germany, having drawn off her infantry, sent for her siege guns. The vast projectiles rose high in the air, and fell so directly on to the cupolas that the curvature thereof did not mitigate the blow. The explosions were terrific. The concrete cracked like an egg-shell. The steel plates were crumpled like paper. The garrison took refuge in the subterranean galleries, there to be followed by deadly fumes against which the doctor sought, by artificial means, to maintain the men's lives. At last General Leman surrendered—more accurately, he was captured when unconscious—and his final dispatch to King Albert moved the world by its expression of unavailing loyalty. So fell Liége, but the full significance of that artillery only dawned on the Allies when, in two days, Namur, the twin fortress,

was also crushed. Maubeuge was the next victim, and, finally, as we shall see, the forts of Antwerp. The coming of the big howitzer meant that no fortified city could be regarded as impregnable, even for a month, if so attacked by an adequate siege train. On land, as on sea, gun-fire had established its mastery over all conceivable armoured defence. If Verdun and Przemysl held out for months against the Germans and Russians respectively, it was because the dreaded artillery was either absent or kept at a distance by lines of trenches.

At Antwerp, to which city the archives were transferred, the King was ready for a siege. But Brussels was not defended. There, a man, not less courageous than the King himself, tranquillised the people. When "the Huns," as they had come to be called, rode up to his city, Burgomaster Max, wearing his scarf of office, went forth to meet them. As a preliminary to negotiations, he was bluntly told to hand over his badges of authority and receive them back from the officers in command. He wisely submitted. Something in the demeanour of the man, or, it may have been, the presence of the American Minister, impressed the Prussians, and, watched as they were by the foreign legations, they dared not deal with Burgomaster Max as they had dealt with burgomasters elsewhere. In a sentence, it was unwise to shoot him. His conduct during the next few weeks won the admiration of the world. Trust your burgomaster, was his motto ; he will

pull you through. He told the Prussians plainly that there was not £8,000,000 in the city, however desirous they might be to levy that sum. They were angry, but were compelled to proceed with caution. When an instalment was overdue, Burgomaster Max was arrested, and the money was somehow found, though on one occasion it was with their own promises to pay that the new rulers were offered satisfaction. The Germans published a proclamation declaring that England and France had told the Burgomaster not to expect further assistance. Next day, the Burgomaster billed the city with posters, declaring that this was a fabrication. The Prussians, with strange lack of humour, announced that no further proclamations by the Burgomaster would be permitted, but the harm had been done. The disclaimer had demonstrated that no reliance could be placed on statements issued by the military. "It does not matter," remarked the Burgomaster; "they cannot prevent me talking," and from the steps of the municipal building he spread the news of the German retreat from Paris. The Prussians demanded the right to attend the meetings of the city fathers. Max stated that if an officer appeared he would promptly dissolve the sitting, so that no business could be transacted. The officers remained away. But his greatest stroke was to come. He was ordered to issue a notice to the people, and, like a sensible man, he obeyed. But he worded the announcement in his own way, and included in it the observation that one can

only bow to force, be it just or unjust. The Germans were furious. They pasted white paper over the placards so that nobody should read the offending words, and night fell. Next morning the placards had been oiled and the print underneath was as plain as ever it had been on the day before. After this, Burgomaster Max disappeared for a while. Field-Marshal von der Goltz found him to be "unserviceable," and he was interned in a convenient fortress.

The parade of a German Army Corps through Brussels was an affair that illustrated the mental isolation of the conquerors. The military forces of Russia, France, and Great Britain were as yet entirely undefeated. The German Navy was closely blockaded. All the big work still lay ahead of the Emperor and his legions. Yet it was held to be seemly, not merely to occupy Brussels in force, which was inevitable enough, but to march thousands of soldiers through her streets—soldiers, whole regiments of whom were doomed to fall in disastrous efforts to pierce the allied lines, whether east or west. They sang "Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles," and so broke into the goose-step. About military ceremonial there is always an element of the ludicrous, and soldiers are most impressive when, as in battle, they are least on show. Of the goose-step it is enough to say that, as a caricature of Prussian discipline, it is a performance of which we shall hear no more, when Prussia learns what is meant by political liberty.

For Germany, the resistance of Belgium was a catastrophe. A month of invaluable time was lost. During this month, Russian millions slowly emerged on the east, France completed her mobilisation, and a British force was landed at Havre and other ports. This was not all. The German casualties in Belgium alone rose to a figure that defied contemporary calculation. The only question was by how many it exceeded 100,000. And, in addition, the vigour of the Belgian forces locked up in Antwerp compelled Germany to contain that citadel with a large army of investment. To these military considerations must be added a loss of prestige. It was made clear that man for man, the Belgian soldier fighting for his country, was equal to the German soldier fighting for a broken treaty. The superiority of the Prussian lay only in numbers concentrated at the striking point. This superiority disappeared, as we shall see, when, contrary to the plans of the general staff at Berlin, the battle developed along parallel confronting lines. It was no wonder that a terrible exasperation overcame the autocracy which had for fifty years held Europe in awe. Henry Labouchere used to say that the professional soldier is always a stupid man. The German soldiers were not so stupid as to be unaware that someone had miscalculated. The philosophy of Potsdam failed to reckon with the psychology of a little nation long accustomed not only to a high standard of wealth, but also to liberty and independence.

On both sides the magnitude of this war was ill appreciated. In England, many people believed that in a month or two the Russians would be well on their way to Berlin. On the other hand, the German conscripts were driven in blinkers. They were told and they believed that England had made the war. They were promised a speedy and painless trip to Paris. German prisoners captured near Liége were astonished to discover that the Belgians, so far from being grateful Allies, were embittered enemies. It was necessary to feed the Fatherland with illusions. The daily ration of good news was always a dainty dish. India was seething with revolt. To Lord Kitchener's appeal only two thousand recruits had responded. The "liveliness" near Heligoland had resulted in the sinking, not of German torpedo craft, but of a fair section of the British Navy. Warsaw had been captured. The British Army in the field had been annihilated. A few days later it was again annihilated. Sometimes an article in some British newspaper would be reproduced. The fact that it never appeared in Fleet Street only added to the skill of the translator. An entire speech by Mr. Burns, with date and place of delivery, was fabricated and cabled over the world. The Socialist newspaper, *Vorwärts*, which hinted at the truth, was periodically suppressed. Even the dialectics of theologians were censored, as a reflection on German unity. To a nation thus deceived, and possibly anxious to be deceived, a succession of speedy triumphs

had to be arranged. If Paris could not be captured, a march through Brussels and the fall of Antwerp would justify a display of bunting in the Unter den Linden.

For years Germany had been credited with a determination to possess Antwerp. Of her over-sea commerce, an immense quantity was carried by way of this port and the river Scheldt. Moreover, for any Power that desired to dominate the North Sea, the estuary on which Antwerp lay would be of great naval value. In the oft-quoted words of Napoleon, Antwerp might be transformed into a pistol aimed at the throat of England. But the fate of the city involved Holland almost as much as it involved Belgium. By the peace of Westphalia, in 1648, Holland was entitled to close the Scheldt against foreign commerce, which right she exercised until 1792. It was the occupation of Antwerp by the French and the opening of the Scheldt that broke down Pitt's resolute policy of peace, so ushering in a British war on the Continent that only ended twenty-three years later at Waterloo. In 1839 Belgium separated herself from Holland, and, once more, the Dutch asserted their rights over the Scheldt. Tolls were levied which only ceased in 1868, and, then, by commutation, to which Great Britain subscribed. In 1914, therefore, the world enjoyed free access to Antwerp, so far as peaceful merchandise was concerned, and it was German aggression alone that opened up thornier problems.

A glance at the map is enough to show us that

for some distance along the Scheldt, below Antwerp, the territory on either shore of the estuary is not Belgian, but Dutch. The fortifications at the mouth of the estuary are also Dutch, and, in international law, many miles of the estuary itself are unquestionably to be reckoned as Dutch waters. Yet the passage of a friendly cruiser up those waters would not have disturbed a single Dutch interest. Such a vessel would not have touched a square yard of Dutch soil. The presence of battleships at Antwerp might have saved that city from evacuation. If ever there was a case where scraps of paper might have been laid aside, it was here. For the Allies, the military necessity was urgent and obvious. The suggested action would have been taken solely as a measure of defence against admitted aggression. And Germany herself had established a precedent for breaking faith with small nations. Moreover, how could Holland have objected? She must have known well enough that, with Germany permanently entrenched at Antwerp, there would be a speedy end to Dutch control of the Scheldt and, indeed, to Dutch control of her own dykes. It is enough to say that neither Belgium, nor France, nor Great Britain, in their anxiety to save Antwerp, swerved a hairsbreadth from the strict path of respect for the rights of Holland over the Scheldt. The public law of Europe was, in this matter, rigidly observed. And Holland could thus breathe freely. She was saved from the necessity of making her choice between ordering

her guns to fire on the British Navy and encountering the German Army for failing so to do.

In the strict sense of the words, Antwerp was captured neither by siege nor by storm, but by an irresistible bombardment. There was food in the place, there was an army in the place, when it fell, but there were no means of replying to Germany's howitzers. For the invaders, the beginning of the operations was more costly than their rapid conclusion. Led in person by King Albert, the Belgian troops made incessant sorties, which kept several German Army Corps fully employed. One advancee was overwhelmed by breaking certain dykes. A considerable force, with artillery, was thus water-logged and suffered heavy losses under the Belgian fire. The passage of the river Nethe was stoutly contested. When their pontoon bridge was sunk, the Germans with desperate courage endeavoured to swim across the river, a feat attended by slaughter. In one case a check was inflicted by a familiar ruse. In a fort, under bombardment, a sham explosion was arranged by means of straw and other devices. Imagining that the place was destroyed, the Germans approached, only to be received with deadly fire which, for the moment, forced back the survivors.

In our next chapter we shall discuss the strategy which in the first three months of the war left Belgium to her fate. Here we must confine our remarks to the narrower issues which arose out of the unsuccessful attempt to relieve Antwerp.

On both sides, the military situation left something to be explained. At the beginning of October, Germany had forced her way to the gates of Paris, and it might have been thought that she would have made certain of cutting off the retreat of the Belgian Army before siege guns opened fire on Antwerp. With the exception of a few thousand troops, including in their number two thousand British naval reservists, who were interned in Holland, the whole of the Belgian forces escaped to fight another day. On the other hand, the Allies, although, as we shall see, their line was steadily extending back again into Belgium, failed to save Antwerp. At the last moment Mr. Churchill dispatched 10,000 reservists, with a few big guns, whose business it was to stiffen a resistance that was plainly hopeless. The reservists hurried from Dunkirk and manned the trenches. Most of them were new to the arts of war. They were swept by a pitiless storm of shrapnel to which they could make no reply. Their presence emboldened King Albert to reject the opportunity, offered to him by the Germans, of surrendering the city before the bombardment of the civilian area began. Critics urged that Antwerp would have suffered less if no British had been sent. Mr. Churchill replied in a characteristic *communiqué*. His defence was, broadly, that the heroism of the reservists was a testimony to Belgium in this, her darkest hour of sacrifice, that Great Britain would never desert her cause.

Of the bombardment itself, due notice was given.



[By permission of Dr. Arthur Taequin

THE GERMANS IN BELGIUM

(DINANT CATHEDRAL—ON THE LEFT—FROM THE LEFFE QUARTER)

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It was owing, doubtless, to a direct appeal from the United States that the marksmen did not on this occasion direct their special aim at the Cathedral and other historic buildings. The city was not destroyed, but the damage here and there was severe. Fires broke out and raged so fiercely that from a distance it seemed as if the fate of Sodom and Gomorrha had overtaken the last refuge of the Belgian people. The din of explosions could be heard for miles. The crash of masonry, the roar of flames, the flight of the population—reminded men who were present of no scene that they had witnessed on earth ; it was the realised vision of Inferno, and when, after a day or two of it, the reservists marched back to Dunkirk, they looked like veterans.

Then was observed the very climax and culmination of the Prussian spirit. Cologne and Berlin broke forth into unbounded rejoicing over the seizure of Antwerp. It was the beginning of the final triumph, and soon there would be a surprise for London. But there was another picture that absorbed the attention of the world. The Germans themselves were startled into uneasiness by the pitiable scenes which marked the exodus of the Belgian people. The number of fugitives from a war, unsought, unexpected, and undeserved, had risen from hundreds of thousands to over a million. Men, women, and children fought for places on the boats. Holland was invaded by armies of the homeless. In Ostend —soon to bewail a similar fate—every room was

full of those who could pay and the rest encamped in the streets. Shiploads of immigrants arrived at Tilbury and Folkestone, utterly bereft of possessions and often of relations. The flight of the Huguenots from the persecution of Louis XIV. was a far less affair than this. The exodus from Egypt was less notable. No carrying into captivity of which Assyrian despot ever dreamt could compare with the eviction of an entire population which stood to the record of the German Empire. And, to crown all, the Kaiser demanded from Antwerp a sum of £25,000,000.

Then—as it seemed—a curious change came over the mind of the triumphant Power. For the first time, Prussia seemed to wince under the responsibility for her deeds. It was not only that she disliked the damage wrought to the machinery of about forty vessels, owned by her people, which were laid up in Antwerp docks. Nor was it only her disappointment at the escape of King Albert, his Government, his Army, and his Archives. What Prussia felt was the fear and hatred of the world. A million or more of law-abiding and unarmed persons, men, women, and children, do not flee, without reason, from their businesses, their homes, and their friends, into any land that is hospitable enough to receive them on any terms. It meant that the German soldier was now regarded as a dangerous savage, safety from whom is best secured by distance. The Army of occupation appealed to the fugitives to return. After all, it was urged, the city was little damaged. The

good people of Antwerp would be kindly treated. Some, doubtless, accepted the invitation and found that Germany, now thoroughly alarmed by the resentment which her excesses provoked, was on her best behaviour. But the majority of the Belgians preferred exposure on the pavement and a bivouac on the roadside to the risk of that benevolence which was so handsomely offered by the Emperor William.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE FIRE SPREADS

THE war, which began thus savagely in Belgium, was not, to use a diplomatic phrase, localised. After four months of it, the Allies represented a population of 800 millions or half the human race, while the Teutonic Emperors, with their reluctant friend, the Sultan of Turkey, could speak for 150 millions. “We have other things to do,” so wrote a German editor, “than to weep for the fate of Belgium, who has drawn her lot upon her by her own fault.” The *Figaro* quickly retorted :

“As for the Germans, all they have to do is to prepare to give her”—that is, Belgium—“all the indemnities which are going to be imposed.”

It was strange that Serbia, recently condemned for regicide, and by none more severely than by Great Britain, should be the occasion of such a conflict ; strange, too, that Belgium, notorious, as a cynic expressed it, for Congo rubber, the trade in worn-out horses, and a traffic still more repugnant to public opinion, should be thus linked with Serbia. Not for the first time did the fate of the

land where lay the fields of Ramillies and Oudenarde, of Waterloo and Malplaquet, determine the destinies of mankind. The population of Belgium was only  $7\frac{1}{2}$  millions, and her territory was but one-fifth the area of Nepal, yet the battle of Ypres was of supreme concern to the fifty sovereign States into which the world was divided. The men who fought in the trenches with King Albert, or who resisted the Austrians at Shabatz, were not the gilded youths of the boulevard, but peasants and villagers, on whose toil the boulevard battens. Brussels and Belgrade might be held in doubtful repute, but here, under the stress of war, emerged the real nation, and for one nation to be ravaged was a crime that concerned all nations, just as all society is concerned with punishing him who commits one murder.

Europe could not allow these small countries to be done to death. If Belgium fell, so, according to Herr von Jagow, the German Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, did Holland. With Serbia would fall every other Balkan Principality. The Teutonic confederation, thus stretching from the North Sea to the Ægean, and beyond the Ægean into the Middle East, would embrace Switzerland, where the German-speaking cantons were a fertile seedplot for *Kultur*. The Pan-German map included Scandinavia. Denmark, Finland, Lapland, and Norway were to be united under Sweden, whose King was to be an Emperor, allied with the Hapsburgs and the Hohenzollerns. Norway was startled one day to discover that a German battle-

ship had steamed past her forts into a fjord, without permission and without notice.

The battle of the Dunes was deciding the suzerainty of races, distant by thousands of miles. After four months of war, Lord Kitchener could boast that King Albert had not left, and did not intend to leave, Belgian soil. In referring to him as "a second John Lackland in flight," the *Cologne Gazette* was nearly, but not quite, justified by facts. Those bloodsodden trenches on the Yser and Dixmude, that heap of ruins, still lay between the Emperor William and an annexation, not of Belgium only, but of Congoland, with 900,000 square miles and 15 millions of inhabitants. The incorporation of Holland would bring 783,000 square miles and a population of 38 millions, with coaling stations in East and West Indies. Germany did not hesitate to march troops through Angola, and so produce, without ultimatum, a state of war against Portugal. The reason was that Portugal held 800,000 square miles and a population of 9 millions. It was intolerable that these three little countries, numbering only 20 millions between them, should rule 62 millions of natives, while Germany, with nearly four times the people at home, should have fewer than one-fourth the subjects abroad. When war broke out there were three, and only three, great world Powers. They were Great Britain, Russia, and the United States. Between them they controlled Asia, Africa, America, the South Seas, and half Europe. Germany demanded a fourth such Empire.

What made the struggle so stupendous was that, from the first, the native races were forced or encouraged to participate. Samoa, with memories of Stevenson, was promptly annexed. Japan seized a number of southern islands and handed them over to Australia. A German cruiser bombarded Papeete, the capital of Tahiti. Another cruiser, the famous *Emden*, was run to ground among the Cocos Islands. Togoland was taken over by the British Colonial Office. Lonely, yet desperate battles were fought on the slopes of Kilimanjaro and on the illimitable veldt. Although China was neutral, her people were stirred by the surrender of Kiao-Chou, which put an end to German prestige in the Far East. Such operations might seem to the European to be secondary to the main conflict. But their effect upon the mind of the coloured races was profound.

Hitherto the native had passively submitted, sometimes after a gallant if ineffectual resistance, to whatever Europe might send him in the way of missions, merchandise, or ammunition. But he was now invited, not only to choose his master, but to pronounce judgment on his master's quarrels, and, further, to assist in enforcing that judgment. The Japanese sailor, who was excluded from Australia as an undesirable alien, convoyed Australian troops to the seat of war in Europe. The Indians, who at the Cape were treated as pariahs, fought at Kiao-Chou, in the Persian Gulf, in East Africa, at Suez, and in Flanders. "I should like to see the lances of the

Bengal Lancers fluttering down the streets of Berlin," so spoke Lord Curzon, "and I should like to see the dark-skinned Gurkha making himself at ease in the gardens of Potsdam." To India, that was the appeal of a superior person, who as Viceroy had presided over a glittering Durbar, whose statue would stand for ever under the Indian skies. Lord Curzon was a friend of the Belgian King, and the host of the King's exiled children. Yet, even as partisan, he must have known that the Bengal Lancers after their progress down the streets of Berlin, and the Gurkhas after their ease in the gardens of Potsdam, could no longer be treated as Lord Curzon had treated the natives whom, so brilliantly yet so haughtily, he had ruled. What was the appeal which Sir James Willcocks, who commanded the Indian contingent, made to these always susceptible troops ? He told them that they would fight "against enemies who have a long history," and he added :

" But is their history as long as yours ? You are the descendants of men who have been mighty rulers and great warriors for many centuries. You will never forget this. You will recall the glories of your race."

Parallel with this language, we set a picture, circulated at the time, not indeed of Indians, but of Algerian Tureos, mounted on horseback and proudly convoying a miserable company of beaten and humiliated German prisoners. That

again meant much for the relations between the rulers and the ruled.

In 1878 the action of Lord Beaconsfield in bringing Indian troops to Europe, without the permission of Parliament, was a subject of protest. Since those strict constitutional days, the forces of the Dominions and of India had been displayed in London at two Jubilees and two Coronations. At this more serious crisis, Mr. Asquith observed the proprieties and obtained the necessary votes in both Houses. But if he had omitted so to do, little would have been said. Parliament itself was reeling under the blows of Prussia. Mr. Asquith, in his direct speech, was content to define the issue as a struggle for international law and the rights of small nations. But the thunder of those guns which made men deaf and dumb and daily drove them mad, was deciding more than that. What was to be the form and purpose of an organised State ? Did the future demand self-governing institutions, as in Britain, or a despotism, as in Prussia ? All the essential features of English life, social, financial, and political, were thrown into the crucible. Would it be necessary to meet conscription by conscription and tariff by tariff, or would voluntary enlistment and freedom of commerce carry the nation to victory ? For the native races also these questions were of significance. The highly centralised and rigid system, imposed by Prussia, was unsuited to colonisation. Dimly, yet truly, the subject peoples discerned that Britain was fighting

a battle against what would be tyranny for the man of colour as much as for the white man. One document, typical of a score, sums up the matter. It is the memorial from the Somali chiefs in Jubaland, and it opens with

“ Salaams, yea, many salaams, with God’s mercy, blessing, and peace.”

“ After salaams,” it proceeds :

“ In former days the Somali have fought against the Government. Even lately the Marehan have fought against the Government. Now we have heard that the German Government have declared war on the English Government. Behold, our “fitna” against the English Government is finished. As the monsoon wind drives the sand hills of our coast into new forms, so does this news of German evil-doing drive our hearts and spears into the service of the English Government. The Jubaland Somali are with the English Government. Daily in our mosques we pray for the success of the English armies. Day is as night and night is as day with us until we hear that the English are victorious. God knows the right. He will help the right. We have heard that Indian askaris have been sent to fight for us in Europe. Humbly we ask why should not the Somali fight for England also. We beg the Government to allow our warriors to show their loyalty. In former days the Somali tribes made fitna against each other. Even now it is so : it is our custom ; yet with the Government against the Germans, we are as one, ourselves, our warriors, our women, and our children. By God it is so. By God it is so. By God it is so.

“ A few days ago many troops of the military

left this country to eat up the Germans who have invaded our country in Africa. May God prosper them. Yet, oh Hakim, with all humbleness we desire to beg of the Government to allow our sons and warriors to take part in this great war against the German evil-doers. They are ready. They are eager. Grant them the boon. God and Mahomed are with us all."

So spoke some of the most restless tribes in East Africa. The language was echoed by Lewanika, Chief of the Barotse, who wrote :

" We shall stand always to be under the English flag."

Griffith, the paramount Chief of Basutoland, was as emphatic :

" I ask whether, as my King is engaged in fighting his enemies, I, his servant, will be doing well to keep aloof watching him being attacked by enemies."

And each Basuto was to subscribe one shilling towards the relief of sufferers in the battle. " I ever pray ' God save the King '—it is I, your servant, Dalindyeto"—so ran another message from the Tembu Chief; while the Sultan of Perak repeated his assurance that " as long as the sun and stars do shine, he will look to no other country but adhere to England." The islanders of Fiji offered warriors, and the offer was accepted.

Into these already seething Oriental communities Germany dropped a bomb, which with her accustomed foresight she had prepared in advance.

With Baron Marschall von Bieberstein as her Ambassador at Constantinople, and with von der Goltz officering the Turkish Army, the Emperor William had gained great influence over the Sultan Abdul Hamid. The revolution appeared to threaten this ascendancy, but in 1914 the old position was restored. Enver Bey and the Young Turks were amenable to German counsels and German gold. The Dardanelles were closed. The capitulations, which guaranteed justice and trade to Christian States, were repudiated. German officers and guns, with money, were hurried to Constantinople. Troops were mobilised. Whatever was left of Turkish finance and prosperity disappeared amid the chaos. The chronic miseries of the people were intensified by famine. No force could withstand these intrigues. Rumania did on one occasion hold up one hundred and fifty trucks of ammunition. The unhappy Sultan tried to counteract Enver's schemes by appointing Prince Yussuf Izzedin, his heir-apparent, to be *Generalissimo*. But, in the end, coercion drove the Turks to war. Ladies were ordered to leave the capital, and British missionaries were recalled.

The methods whereby the Kaiser achieved his purpose are happily unusual. A German cruiser, the *Breslau*, after bombarding the open town of Boma in Algeria, joined the powerful warship, *Goeben*, at Messina. The refuge in this neutral port could only be brief, and the crews, on embarking, left keepsakes behind them, including a signed portrait of the Emperor. The vessels then set

forth, with bands playing, on their last “hussar ride” against the combined Anglo-French Fleets in the Mediterranean. They slipped through the Straits of Otranto, and, eluding capture, arrived safely at the Dardanelles. There it was announced that they would be sold to Turkey, and Great Britain stipulated that the German crews must be dismissed. Purchase and dismissal were alike illusory. The ships, though nominally interned, remained active units in the belligerent navy, and after interfering with British steamers in the Bosphorus, they were used to coerce Turkey into bombarding Odessa. War with the Sultan was made inevitable. As in the case of Portugal, the hostilities were started at the instance of Germany, without ultimatum or other declaration. For diplomacy was substituted simple piracy.

As a military force, the Ottoman Empire had been weakened by the Balkan War. The utmost that Germany could expect from the Sultan would be a diversion against Russia, along the Caucasus and against Egypt at Suez. But it was not upon this military co-operation, as such, that the Emperor depended. The Sultan, though he trembled under the guns of the *Goeben*, still exercised spiritual dominion throughout the Moslem world. The greatest of Mohammedan powers was the British Empire. To attack Constantinople might be for England as perilous an enterprise as it would have been for Spain to attack the Papal States. No sooner had war been provoked than the Emperor was able to telegraph to the Crown

Prince that the Sheik-ul-Islam had issued a Fetwa. For all Moslems it was "a religious duty" to fight to the uttermost "the oppressors" of the faith. "This," said the Kaiser, "means the Holy War for the entire Islamic world," and to signalise so beneficent an achievement by the Fatherland, the Emperor was hailed throughout Turkey as "Hadji Mahomed William."

Turkey had forgotten that England and France fought the Crimean War on her behalf, and afterwards financed her with money, put, as Lord Salisbury said, on the wrong horse. It happened that, as matters were reaching a crisis, the long and pro-German reign of King Carol of Rumania came to an end. The funeral of the sovereign was attended by Mr. Noel Buxton, a Member of Parliament, and by his brother. For fifteen years the name of Buxton had stood in the Balkans for liberation and progress. For fifteen years that name had been detested by the Turk. An assassin shot at and wounded both the brothers, and Constantinople did not hesitate to applaud a deed as infamous as the murders at Sarajevo. The comment of a German writer, Herr Paul Block, as published in the *Berliner Tageblatt*, is one more symptom of the German standard at this difficult time :

"Out of Christianity and hatred of the Turks Buxton did a splendid business for his Fatherland, and when he snapped his mighty jaws one could hear the bones of poor Turkey crushed between them. A wild young Turk has shot Herr Noe!

Buxton in the jaw. Of course this is a deed which every civilised man must disapprove. But I cannot help myself. I rejoice that it was precisely in the mouth that this Mr. Buxton was wounded. For it was a mouth full of guile and arrogance towards everything that was not English, and so this shot seems to me symbolical. Your own island country has been shot through your esteemed jaw, Mr. Noel Buxton. I know that it is brutal, but with all my heart I hope that it may do you and old England good."

To those who knew Mr. Buxton's gentleness of demeanour, it did not seem possible that he could be guilty of snapping his mighty jaws, whether on poor Turkey or any other distressed community.

The new danger was not to be ignored. In Egypt, the Khedive, who had added to his household an Austrian lady of aristocratic family, was at times impatient of British advice. In India, there were 70 millions of Moslems to whom an invitation to turn on the whites, and incidentally on the Hindoos, must have been, if uncensored, a substantial matter. If the Holy War had been waged, as the Kaiser hoped, throughout the Islamic world, seas of blood would have flowed. But, happily for the world, the Moslem leaders, with the Aga Khan at their head, declined, at such invitation, to commit so atrocious a crime. Where religion and nationality clashed, it was nationality that, throughout these events, asserted itself. The Kaiser Bell in Cologne Cathedral pealed exultation over the smoking ruins of Cathedrals in France and Belgium. The Catholic

Bavarians tasted the bayonets of the Catholic Irish. The Protestants of Berlin slew the Protestants of Belfast. Hindoo and Moslem fought side by side against the Hadji Mahomed William and the Sultan. And it is to the credit of the native races that they preferred the word of the Englishman to the abnegation of law and of truth which had been reduced by Treitschke to a philosophy and by Bismarck to a policy. The Moslems of Sierra Leone put the case thus :

“ Certainly, but for Great Britain, with the possession of Africa by the several European Powers, all her native population would have become human chattels to their respective Over Lords. Some of us have had the privilege of travelling to foreign parts, and from our experience of the treatment received by natives at the hands of their foreign rulers, especially the Germans, whose destruction may God expedite, we cannot but come to the above conclusion.”

They add that if the Sultan of Turkey himself were to invade Sierra Leone they would, as Moslems, support the British.

During a struggle so complex the original issue, as stated by Mr. Asquith, was apt to be obscured. Men talked about capturing Germany’s commerce and colonies, as if Great Britain stood in need of either. No one who heard Mr. Harcourt’s annual statement on British dependencies could believe that the Colonial Office would welcome yet another pigeon-hole for Togoland. And the trouble with British commerce was not that it

lacked volume, but that its profits were apt to be squandered by the few where they should have nourished the many. The financial crisis in August was due, not to the illusion that Germany and England are commercial enemies, but to the less recognised fact that they are commercial partners. The woollen mills of Yorkshire needed German dyes, and German sugar was consumed in factories and homes. What Britain desired was that Germany herself should be freed from military domination. If the German Fleet could be sunk, there would be instant reduction in British expenditure. If, on the other hand, Germany were to triumph, she, like England, would be condemned to that double burden, a big fleet and a big army, which, in their turns, Spain and France had been unable to support. With Russia pressing into Galicia and with the Ottoman Empire *in extremis*, the map of Europe would have to be modified. But the real question was not what should be the contour of the new states. That might be of chief importance to potentates, but to the people, what mattered was whether the states were to live in future as friends or as enemies. On this depended the solvency of Europe, and, early in the campaign, Mr. Churchill enunciated the principle that the new countries should be carved out, not according to the wishes of Governments, but according to the racial sympathies of the inhabitants. For Poland, for Asia Minor, for Bosnia, and last but not least, for Palestine, with her holy places, this ideal of a plebiscite was of supreme moment.

It must not be imagined that Germany entered upon the struggle with moral misgivings. Bitter as was her hatred of England, she knew that for her all else was subordinate to the conflict between Teuton and Slav. An obscure "League of Humanity" might denounce the Emperor as "the uncurbed tyrant, surrounded by parasites, now directing the most desperate, devilish, and selfish campaign ever waged against humanity." But "the despot whose insatiable egotism is drenching Europe with the blood of its workers and wage-earners" was not so regarded even by Socialists in Germany. At that memorable scene in the White Room of the Palace, when Emperor and Reichstag met on the outbreak of war, the Socialist leaders, like the rest, gave their hands to the War Lord. Poutsma, the South African Trade Unionist, saw the Kaiser at Berlin. "The picture," he wrote, "is a vivid memory. He did not bow once in acknowledgment of the shouts of the crowd. The Crown Prince and his wife nodded and smiled continually, but the Emperor sat with one hand at his golden helmet, stern and inscrutable, a figure of destiny. There was not, during the whole time, the faintest flicker of a smile." During the war, the Emperor was everywhere. He watched the repulse of his troops at Nancy. He ordered his Guards to storm Ypres. His blue cloak was said to have been captured in Poland. He was worshipped as a martyr, and when he passed through Berlin, the people dropped on their knees and prayed for him. It was fear—fear of Russia

that made his people loyal to their sovereign and cruel to their foes.

So was waged war between the Empire that produced Treitschke and the Empire that produced Tolstoy. Both these mighty States were ruled by despots. Both of them were burdened by conscription. Both of them had oppressed subject races like the Poles, the Danes, and the Finns. Both of them, in varying degrees, persecuted or discriminated against the Jews. Both of them were sinking slowly into debt. In both, the press was bullied and muzzled. In both, the workers and their organisations were harried by the authorities. Russia was not yet rid of her Siberian system. She still spied upon her intellectuals, and exiled Prince Krapotkine. The life of her Czar was still dependent upon a vigilant isolation from his people. There was still the Black Hundred, the knout, the secret accusation, and secret condemnation by a corrupt police. Russia was still able to cherish animus against her Bourzeffs. The Kaiser, who found the English "contemptible" and the French "degenerate," could still declare with a show of plausibility that Russia was "barbarian." Indeed, one of the causes of bitterness between the two peoples was the fact that many of the highest positions in the Court, the Government, and the Commerce of Russia were held, not by Slavs, but by men of German extraction. The attitude of the true Russian towards these immigrants somewhat resembled the attitude of the true Turk to the

Armenian or Greek who lends him money, sells him carpets, or manages his exchequer. The change of name from St. Petersburg, with its German termination, to Petrograd, although in itself as trivial a matter as the change in Berlin of Englische Strasse to Deutsche Strasse, did at least express the desire of the Russian to break away at last from a somewhat domineering tutelage. Yet the Russian conscripts, on crossing the frontier, were impressed by the comfort and cleanliness of German homes, and by the fact that German conscripts wore watches.

The struggle between England and Germany has been easy to define. It was a sudden collision between a Parliamentary civilisation and a hardening autocracy. If prophecy was to be permitted, the chief question was whether both nations would not be dragged still deeper into the same abyss of militarism. But the conflict on the eastern frontiers lay between despotism and despotism. In the march of material progress, Russia was undoubtedly the more backward, and her villages the more squalid, of the two. But we have to ask ourselves, not merely at what point in its evolution each of these great communities had arrived, but also at what goal the people were aiming. An intelligent German would defend despotism as a good in itself and war as a blessing. An intelligent Russian would apologise for despotism as a concession to ignorance and for war as a concession to the devil. The eye of the German saw no further than the frontiers of force.

The eye of the Slav looked forward with a peculiar intensity to a brotherhood of man. The faith of Germany was reposed in a Hammer God whose attribute was Power and whose function was Success. The faith of Russia still clung with passionate fervour to the Deity as Redeemer, Whose function was Sacrifice. What Germany saw in the Balkans was a line of railway that might link her trade and her troops with Mesopotamia. What Russia saw in the Balkans was a kindred Church and an associated Altar. Both powers were aggressive, but the aggression of Germany was directed suddenly against countries which were her equals in civilisation, and, for this reason, stood in her path. The aggression of Russia was slow, inevitable, and, with the exceptions of Finland and Poland, where there was hope of her changing her attitude, directed to civilising races, manifestly less advanced than herself. The most recent, and to many English Liberals the most deplorable, manifestation of the Russian method was to be found in Persia. But, even here, it cannot be denied that the root of the trouble lay not in St. Petersburg but in Teheran. For generations, Persia had been sinking into chaos and decay. Moreover, some allowance should be made for the way that things are done. For an Empire to extend its borders by patient penetration of a decadent state may do no injury to anyone, but may on the contrary open up a new opportunity of distinction for some ancient yet neglected race. It is a different matter if the

territorial extension be secured violently and at the cost of a rupture of the peace within the confines of Christendom.

On those occasions when the flags of the Allies were displayed in England, it was noted that the emblems of Russia were by no means the most popular. Czardom was welcomed as "a steam-roller" rather than as an ally, one with England in aims and moral standards. An insular race had still to realise that however oppressive the Russian bureaucracy might be in a political sense, there lay within it an instinct for *laissez-faire* which was utterly foreign to the conception of life as a drill and a system, so strenuously promulgated in Prussia. The State was an institution which men could avoid, resist, obey, or defy. It was not an atmosphere which they had to breathe. The very fact that free thought was often persecuted meant that thought had not been stifled. In view of professional propaganda in Prussia there is an immense significance in the warning against State education which Tolstoy, in the year 1896, addressed to Russian Liberals. "It is most undesirable," said he, "to let the Government, while it is spreading darkness, pretend to be busy with the enlightenment of the people. It is doing this now by means of all sorts of pseudo-educational establishments which it controls—schools, high schools, universities, academies, and all kinds of committees and congresses." What Tolstoy feared was not the oppression of ideals, but that the people's mind should be so drugged or, to use the

Chinese word, doped as to be insensible to them. In Russia, however persistent might seem to be her superstitions, there was still an open vision among the people. The Universities were on the whole the centre of a freer life than that of the State. In Russian music, Russian art, Russian literature, and Russian ballet, there was that unmistakable and individual quality of genius which reveals the wind, blowing where it listeth. No one could suggest that Gorky, Tolstoy, and Pavlova were enslaved to a bureaucracy. The Russian peoples were capable of sudden achievements in the region of ethics which were the despair of reformers elsewhere. While the United Kingdom was painfully closing her public-houses an hour or two earlier, Russia adopted a virtual prohibition of alcohol, for rich and poor, and for all time. What Russia aimed at was not *kultur*, as such. Her soil was "holy," and to defend that soil was the work of mystics who bowed to the earth before the ikons which Prussians collected for their wives and their museums.

It is by some such road that we arrive at the apparent paradox whereby Russia, with so ill a reputation for Liberalism, stood forth in Europe as the one emancipating champion of the smaller nations in the Balkans. If to-day that perplexing peninsula is parcelled out broadly, though not, it is to be feared, exactly, according to the desires of the people themselves, the achievement is due to the interventions of Russia or to the certainty

that, if the work were hindered, she would be ready to intervene. The British have established free commonwealths in territories which were previously vacant. Russia has to her credit the existence of no fewer than five nationalities, living contentedly under the forms at any rate of representative government, every one of which has known that, apart from such minor rectifications of frontier as were wrung from Greece in 1896, no loss of territory and no loss of independence would be permitted, however strong the aggressor. The policy pursued by Russia in the Balkans has not been annexation. She *has claimed no suzerainty* or tutelage. She has steadily respected political liberties which, in fact, were not enjoyed by her own people. Whatever may have been her motive, her actions have made her the reliable protector of a developing civilisation which, without her support, would have been obliterated long ago by Austrian statesmanship. No one who values the Gladstonian tradition will question the splendour of Russia's record in the Near East, and no one who reads the White Paper will dispute the statement that this record was the rock of offence which was to be blasted away by the dynamite of war. The answer of Russia has been paraphrased by a brilliant, if unconventional, British Minister. "He turned to Austria,"—this is how Mr. Lloyd George put it—"and said, 'You lay hands on that little fellow, and I will tear your ramshackle Empire limb from limb.' And he is doing it."

The world war thus spread like a prairie fire. We have now to examine the threefold part played by the British Empire. We will begin with the Army, proceed to the Navy, and afterwards consider Finance.

## CHAPTER X

### THE BRITISH TAKE THE FIELD

THE statesman who made the British Army what it proved itself to be in Flanders was a Scottish lawyer, who confessed that his spiritual home was the Fatherland. When war came, the *Cologne Gazette* exclaimed regretfully of Lord Haldane, “What a pity for the good German philosophy wasted on the man !” In discussing Mr. Haldane with his Generals, the Kaiser remarked upon the absurdity of having a Minister for War who could not ride. The same instinct led the public to demand that Lord Kitchener should be summoned to Whitehall instead of this amiable civilian on the Woolsack. The best tribute to the past labours of the civilian is to be found in the first dispatch from Sir John French :

“The transport of the troops from England both by sea and by rail was effected in the best order and without a check. Each unit arrived at its destination in this country well within the scheduled time.”

Lord Haldane might not be able to ride, but he could organise. If his oratory was verbose, his

administration was direct and decisive. His explanations might be obscure, but not his aims. An admirer once described him as efficiency in a fog, and the fog beamed with radiant geniality. Parliamentarians, who were anxious about cordite, were blandly invited to look at the walking-stick of that formidable material on which the Secretary of State rested a somewhat heavy arm. Even the trying ordeal of an all-night sitting in the House of Commons over the Army Annual Bill failed to exhaust the unfailing good temper of this imperturbable personage.

Lord Haldane admired not only the German people, but also the German Emperor, who, he said in 1912, "is something more than Emperor. He is gifted by the gods with the highest gift that they can give—I use a German word to express it—*Geist*. He has got *Geist* in the highest degree. He has been a true leader of his people—a leader in spirit as well as in deed. He has guided them through nearly a quarter of a century, and preserved unbroken peace. I know no record of which a monarch has better cause to be proud." This was the language used, two years before the war, by the statesman who organised the Expeditionary Force which frustrated the designs of the Emperor on France. It was a startling description of the man who was denounced by the Chief Liberal Whip as "the blasphemous bully of Potsdam." Something must be allowed, doubtless, for diplomatic necessity, for it was on Lord Haldane that the duty of making a last

attempt to clear away misunderstandings from the mind of the Emperor was imposed by the Cabinet.

Lord Haldane's was a hard task. To whatever party they belonged, the work of reorganising the Army had beaten his predecessors. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman was a shrewd minister, but the War Office was too much for him, both in Pall Mall and in Parliament. Lord Lansdowne fared no better, and, during the dark days of the Boer War, he was threatened with a Fleet Street Impeachment. Mr. Brodrick barely muddled through, while Mr. Arnold Forster, already in failing health, was prevented from giving the nation an efficient Army by a Cabinet which was too deeply preoccupied in domestic controversy to be able to tackle so thorny a problem. Among Liberal Ministers themselves it is doubtful if any other than Lord Haldane could have achieved his success. In 1906 he was confronted by a House of Commons which demanded, not a better Army, but lower Estimates. He provided both. Many of his military advisers secretly wanted the Conscription for which Lord Roberts was crusading, and, in any case, Conscription or no Conscription, the County Families, which were set to work the voluntary system, disliked even the modified Liberalism which was associated with Lord Haldane's political reputation. These were the entrenchments which it was necessary to storm. And there was a constant flank attack. Sir Charles Dilke was a powerful critic of the Cardwell system of battalions, linked with India, which

Lord Haldane retained. The debates on the new Army were often a duel between the Minister who was and the Minister who might have been.

In 1906 there was an Army in three lines, the Regulars, the Militia, and the Volunteers. Lord Haldane substituted two lines, which he called the Expeditionary Force, for service abroad, and the Territorials, for service at home. The Militia disappeared. The change affected much more than mere names. Hitherto the Army had been a miscellaneous collection of infantry, cavalry, artillery, and so on, mainly unorganised for instant war. Under the new regime, divisions were established which were complete in themselves—so many infantry, so many cavalry, so much artillery, with all the required ammunition trains, engineers, ambulance, transport, and material. A reduction in establishment of 20,000 men was well worth while when accompanied by this perfect organisation and equipment. The Expeditionary Force was placed in France without the loss of a man or a horse. The food in the trenches was often better than the food with which many a recruit had to be content at home.

The War Office had been a cold stepmother to the Volunteers. They were the amateurs whom no soldier would take seriously. Lord Haldane broke down that prejudice. The Establishment of the Territorials was 11,000 officers and 301,000 men. In July 1914 the Strength was short by about 60,000 men and officers, but in quality and equipment there were here a quarter of a million

soldiers, the best of whom quickly proved themselves the equals, man for man, of a crack Prussian regiment. Their artillery consisted of batteries which had seen service in South Africa and had been brought up-to-date. In certain technical matters like range-finding, the Territorials were doubtless slower than the professional artillerymen who had devoted their lives to the business. But as marksmen with the rifle and in a bayonet charge—as the London Scottish soon demonstrated—they were as efficient as the lads who fought at Waterloo, and more efficient than the average German conscript. The Territorials were enlisted for home service only. But there was no hesitation in asking them to volunteer for the front, and at an early period of the war tens of thousands of them were in France. When Egypt was attacked, the English garrison consisted largely of Territorials, whose splendid appearance on parade was a triumph of the voluntary system. The public school, the golf-course, and the football field turned out as excellent soldiers as could be trained in the barrack and on the parade ground.

The British Army, like the British Constitution, was infused with reliance on the individual. The soldier was taught that, whatever happened to the regiment, he must hold his place in the firing line, and, instead of aiming at the mass of the enemy, always mark one man. Such a soldier did not know when he was beaten. As long as he remained alive, he went on with his appointed work of marking down an enemy. His sense of

a personal duty to be done, even if he be alone to do it, was quickened by his habit, learnt in South Africa, of fighting in loose or open formation, while his devotion to games of dash and daring made him what a German called "a smiling devil" with the bayonet. Strange though it be to record the fact, it was with bayonet and bullet that the German soldier failed.

The attitude of Germany towards the British soldier was thus explained by Professor Wundt, of Leipzig :

"This Lord Kitchener raises the pay of the English mercenary army in order to increase their patriotism. Mercenary troops are unknown to us, and we do not carry on this war as a business transaction."

"You are not playing for the same stakes, you gentlemen of England!" protested the *Cologne Gazette*. "You have no right to speak until you put into the field the flower of your people and not the scum of your people." There follows a picture of "princes and workmen, counts and peasants, Catholics, Protestants and Jews, Socialists and Conservatives, all dying for the Fatherland."

In a sense, it was true. An Englishman from Berlin gives this testimony :

"Women have sent their men forth without a tear, and have told them that they never want to and never will see them again except as victors.

"We must not delude ourselves by thinking that the German millions have been dragooned to their colours or driven into action. They have gone willingly, gladly. The very soul and life of

the nation is in the struggle. Students have laid down their books without regret, workmen their tools without a murmur.

"It is part of their faith and religion that in every great crisis of their history a heaven-born leader—a great Elector or a great Frederick—has appeared. They believe that they are (now) led by such an one, who says to them, 'We are right, and God is with us.' "

To quote the Kaiser's telegram to the Duke of Cumberland :

"God the Lord who has already done so much with us will in His Grace do more with us and our deed-doing troops. In the end He will give us victory over all our terrible foes."

Victory—yes—but at what cost? The youths of Magdeburg, summoned to volunteer, were told that "an age of iron has dawned," even for boys of sixteen years.

Prussian tactics were still dominated by memories of 1870. In that fortunate campaign the invaders enjoyed a twofold superiority, first in artillery and secondly in mobilisation. At any given point there were always, when needed, more and better guns and more men on the German than on the French side. This meant either that a position was carried by artillery only, or that by rushing forward masses of infantry, constantly reinforced, it was gained by sheer weight of numbers. Against the ill-armed and ill-informed troops of Napoleon III. these methods prevailed, but, it should be remembered, only at a cost in

life which was far heavier for the victors than for the vanquished. In 1914, Germany applied to the Allied forces the same prodigal pressure which carried the day at Worth and Gravelotte. But the conditions had changed. The French field artillery, so far from being silenced by the German, was the best in Europe, and well handled. Germany had no longer an advantage in numbers, whether of guns or of men. For her to fight this new war by sacrificing two or three men for every man lost to the Allies was indulging in a wild gamble, with the odds all against her. Month after month the German officers persisted in those close formations, those frontal attacks by men in the mass, the penalty for which was massacre. Soldiers in picked regiments fired from the hip without attempting to take a particular aim. The doctors were astonished to find how few were the British casualties from bullets, as distinct from shrapnel. The Germans, on their side, were much impressed by the deadliness of rifle fire by an army that had been trained not in the goose-step, nor in exaggerated salutes for officers and other parade-ground antics, but in individual self-reliance and skill in the use of weapons. It was the old story of militarism defeating itself. Since the days of Thermopylæ and Horatius, despotism has always overdone the display of war, and its legions have always been unequal to the opposition of soldiers, trained not only to fighting, but also to freedom. It was not mere stupidity that piled up the German casualty lists until, after three months of it, a

million and a half of men had died, been wounded, or taken prisoner. It was the working out in war of a certain definite, political, and ethical standard, by which the dignity of man is subordinated entirely to the supposed interests of empires and dynasties. The entire system was directed to crushing the conscript's independence of mind. A fragment of metal would indifferently assault the arm of a Kreisler, laden with music, and the hind quarters of a carthorse. The very word of command disappeared, and companies, like packs of hounds, were expected to obey the officers' whistle. "The officers warned us," said a German prisoner, "that if we gave way, fire would be opened on us from behind. This threat was carried into effect when the losses we suffered compelled us to retire. Indeed, it was by a German bullet that I was wounded." The courage in all ranks was amazing, but it was collective; the courage of a crowd, never left to itself, but shepherded, if need be, by the drawn sword of discipline. For the object of the German Army was not only to defend the country's frontiers against invasion. The Hohenzollerns also wanted to defend themselves and their Junkers against Socialism. To teach the conscript, as an individual, to shoot would have been too dangerous a lesson. War must be waged not with the rifle and the bayonet, but with wholesale instruments of slaughter, held strictly within Government control.

For Britain, the first stress of conflict fell on

the Regulars. One cannot write unmoved of those Irish Guards, marching down the Embankment, on their way to the front, their tunics open at the throat, their rifles anyhow, and their faces stricken with the look that men have as soon as death is at close quarters. When war breaks out, some song catches the ear of the people. It was not "Rule Britannia," nor the "Marseillaise," but a quaint Irish ditty, set to a haunting yet popular melody :

"It's a long, long way to Tipperary,  
It's a long way to go."

That, perhaps, was a strange anthem with which to nerve an island race to battle, yet it was characteristic. The verse expressed neither jingoism nor hatred, but only a half-humorous sorrow at the job to be done. For many of those Irish Guards it would be, indeed, a long, long way back to Tipperary—a long way to go.

The British soldier made little fuss about his heroism. But although he was less inclined to preachments than Cromwell's iron-sides, and at times more open to the seductive hospitality of the public-house, he behaved on the whole with great sobriety, self-restraint, and cheerfulness. On every possible occasion he played football or read about it. His great desire was to shave and keep clean. A company of cavalry were amusing themselves with water polo in the Oise when they were surprised by Uhlans. The bathers sprang, naked, on to their horses and drove off

the intruders. At the very moment when in England a lively campaign was raging in the press against professional football, the following delightful story reached us from France. "When I got my wound in the leg," wrote a private, "it was because I got too excited in arguing with Wee Geordie Ferris of our company about Queen's Park Rangers and their chances this season." The soldiers murmured against French tobacco, were grateful for French fruit and coffee, and cut the buttons off their coats as keepsakes for French maidens, who would insist on linking arms and were voted "a blooming nuisance." Their view of the war was simple. "Kaiser Bill," as they called him, "wanted taking down a bit," and this would be the work of the British Army. The French called their bayonets "Rosalie" because the red sun stained them crimson. The British soldier was less poetic. To him the Prussian shells were "Black Marias," "Coalboxes," or "Jack Johnsons," the last a tribute to the prize-ring. The trenches were named after hotels—the Ritz, the Savoy, and the Cecil. But, amid the nonchalance and the slang could be discerned the new dignity of the soldier as a man. In the South African War his poet was Mr. Rudyard Kipling, in whose jingles he was still Tommy Atkins. In the War of 1914, to quote either the rhymes of 1900 or the nickname would have been regarded as an insult. The Army could no longer be described as an alternative to the poorhouse. The service had outlived all such taunts.

Field-Marshal Sir John French is brother to Mrs. Despard, a woman of rare courage and the champion of her sex. She described him as "the happy warrior in being," who worshipped Napoleon. "War is the game the General best loves," was this sister's testimony. The British Commander was a man of books, but not a book-worm. He had studied the battlefields of Belgium and France, not as a spy, but openly, as a historian. Every attaché knew where he spent his holidays. He was strictly a soldier, loyal to the civil authority and intolerant of politics in the messroom. If he resigned his high position at the War Office, it was because his view of the Curragh incident proved him a better constitutionalist than the Secretary of State, Colonel Seely. Sir John French, at the outset, commanded the smallest army then fighting in Europe. He quickly gained that indefinable prestige which under somewhat similar circumstances was won by Sir John Moore and Sir Arthur Wellesley. He was "moderate, resolute, whole in himself, a common good."

The Commander of a modern army is seldom seen by his troops. He does not ride, as Wellington rode, along the battle line where the work is warmest. His headquarters are situated in some retired mansion, which for the time being is transformed into a telephone exchange. His staff receive 2500 messages a day. They manage the railway service, commandeer supplies, and control thousands of motor vehicles, among them

the familiar London omnibus. It was no use, under these circumstances, to entrust a high command to some officer of the old school who could lead a charge, but had no other qualification unless, it might be, a certain breeziness of discourse. Even as a leader of cavalry in South Africa, Sir John French had earned a compelling distinction. He was a student who knew all the arts of war, and among his first tasks was that of insisting that the British soldier, already an adept in taking cover, should learn "to dig himself in."

The relations between Sir John French and General Joffre were bound at first to be a little delicate. The British Commander was senior in rank, being a Field-Marshal, and had commanded successfully in serious war. But he was fighting on foreign soil and in very small force. General Joffre was a true Republican, without a trace of the Boulanger or the Buonaparte, but his staff, as had always been the case in the French Army, were more aristocratic in their sympathies and longed for a Court, whether Royalist or Napoleonic. Prince Buonaparte and the Duc de Vendôme both offered their service, but were debarred by law from going to the front, nor did President Poincaré relax the decree, although the Duke was brother-in-law to the King of the Belgians. In both England and France, therefore, the war at the outset was unaccompanied by political reaction. But it may be, none the less, that among officers in the French Army who looked back with pride

on the varied fortunes of Louis XIV. and the great Napoleon, the presence of the English, not as hereditary foes, but as recent allies, seemed strange. Sir John French did the wisest thing. He accepted without demur the plans of General Joffre. He and his little force went where they were told, to Mons, there to guard the extreme left of the allied line.

It is, of course, arguable that Great Britain would have best consulted her material interests if she had disclaimed all concern in wars on the Continent of Europe. If other countries liked to destroy one another, we should become relatively the stronger by keeping our powder dry and trading amicably with both sides. Mr. Asquith's view was that he would rather see the Empire blotted out than advise the adoption of so ignoble an isolation. Nor was it possible to limit intervention to a blockade of the German coast by the British Navy. This use of the fleet did, as we shall see, reduce Germany to exhaustion, without imposing any special burden, whether of personal service or of public expenditure, on Great Britain. But the Army as well as the Navy had to be employed. No war—least of all, this war—could be waged on the convenient principle of a limited liability for a leading and a favoured combatant. If England's risks had differed in kind from the risks borne by her Allies, no solid front against a common menace would have been possible. Britain, like all the other belligerents, had to fight with both hands and to stake on the result her

long and well-filled purse, her prestige, her heritage throughout the world.

Nor was there a short-cut to victory. Doubtless the arm-chair strategists had their own pet plan for checking the German advance on Paris. When von Kluck wheeled his Army through Brussels into France, it was held that an allied force, based upon Dunkirk and Antwerp, should strike at his lines of communication and so encircle him in a ring of steel. When a few British marines were landed at Ostend, it seemed clear that some such great event would follow. But the invasion was pressed forward without any flanking movement being discoverable, and all that the optimists could then urge was that the longer the line of communications, the more certainly would they be severed. The constant cry of the Belgians was "Where are the English?" and the German answer was as constant, "The English are powerless to help you." As the devastation proceeded, the middle classes in Belgium were bitterly disappointed over the failure of the Allies to defend the line of the Meuse. The industrial population, having relied on the European guarantee by which Belgium existed, were untrained to war. It cannot be said of them that they hurried to the colours. Indeed, there were some victims who in their hearts deplored the boldness of their Sovereign, and would have made terms with Prussia. But the hospitality extended by England to the refugees, the knowledge that during the war and in the subsequent repatriation Belgium could rely on British and

American credit, the heroic stand made in due course by the British Army in the field, and, finally, the insensate cruelty of the German troops—all this preserved Belgium from the last miseries of revolutionary dissension.

The truth is that France was not in a position to advance to the relief of Liége. The action of Germany in springing war upon Europe, and her vast, secret, and immoral expenditure on guns and material, did give her an advantage over other nations who desired to live at peace. To this extent, the comparative unreadiness of France was hardly a matter for censure. But it is necessary here to make a less flattering observation. Detestable as was Prussian militarism, there was still about it a spirit of barbaric honesty. The men who spied on their neighbours and set fire to cathedrals did not play fast and loose with guns and ammunition. The equipment of the Uhlans was superb. Every detail was thought out. Princes, Royal Dukes, Monarchs themselves went into battle, came under fire, were wounded and killed. The despotism was cruel and rigid, but it was steady and efficient. In the Republic, however, Governments rose and fell in a night. No Minister was sufficiently secure of his portfolio to make his personality felt. When war broke out the French Army suffered from serious shortages, and immense orders for boots and other material were placed in England. General Joffre could not save Belgium. He held his own fortified frontier to the south. He created a spectacular, but

otherwise futile diversion in Alsace. And it was not until the war had been in progress for two months that the French reserves, clad in new uniforms, began in a steady stream to strengthen the armies in the field.

Under these circumstances, a plunge at the German communications by an Expeditionary Force of British troops, numbering, say, 250,000 men, could have been no more than a brilliant and disconcerting exploit. Germany would have concentrated an immensely superior army which would have driven back the new enemy, possibly surrounded him, and certainly pinned him to the coast. Neither Mr. Asquith nor Lord Kitchener was the man to take such risks. They realised from the first that this conflict would be a long and desperate ding-dong battle.

The legend of an encircling movement which would end the war before Christmas did not easily die. It was hatched in perhaps the most gigantic mare's nest ever recorded in the annals of war. The statement was that a Russian force, estimated at 300,000 men, had been transhipped from Archangel, along a route which was officially declared to be open for butter and eggs. The phantom Russians landed in Scotland and were thence entrained for ports in the south, and particularly for Bristol and Southampton, where they embarked for Ostend, Calais, and Dunkirk. It is probable that some such daring stroke was at an earlier date considered by the Cabinet. At the outset of the war in Belgium, the troops would have been

of incalculable value. But the scheme was impossible. A single line of railway alone ran to Archangel. The port contained no docks from which artillery and heavy material could be shipped, and open boats would have had to be used. Moreover, it is doubtful whether politically it would have been wise to admit that on the western front, as on the eastern, the war depended on Russia. The intentions of that mighty Power were excellent, but the ultimate settlement was already in men's minds.

The Russians, none the less, made their presence felt wherever men gathered to gossip. Leith was full of them. For days at a time the North-Western Railway was held up in order that train-loads might pass southwards, scores of them a day. A lady who gave cigarettes to the Cossacks at Crewe knew them by their beards. Gloucestershire was alive with the visitors. On Salisbury Plain they were clad in Khaki. They were seen at Ostend. They marched through Maida Vale. Their commanding officers were received by the King. People did not believe that they were Highlanders who talked Gaelic and had their own way of enunciating Ross-shire. Nor was the scepticism quite so unreasonable as it may seem after the event. The Russian myth sprang up spontaneously in the most remote parts of the country. It was everywhere all at once. Moreover, the corroborative evidence of transport was sound enough. The Government had, in fact, taken over the railways. An immense military

traffic was actually in progress. Every ton of shipping in every port on our coasts had been requisitioned. Thousands of motor vehicles had been compulsorily purchased. Scores of thousands of horses were commandeered at army prices from reluctant owners. The uninstructed did not realise that it takes four tons of shipping, or it may be more than four tons, to transport one soldier in a fully equipped force. And so silent was the achievement that it was not even mentioned in the press until weeks after the troops were in the field.

On the 19th of August the Emperor issued from Aix-la-Chapelle an Army Order which he afterwards regretted. It began thus :

“ It is my Royal and Imperial Command that you concentrate your energies, for the immediate present, on one immediate purpose, and that you address all your skill and all the valour of my soldiers to exterminate first the treacherous English and walk over General French’s contemptible little Army.”

With vast forces, drawn over a front of hundreds of miles, and informed at all points by aircraft, telegraph, and telephone, there is not in a modern campaign much room for the element of surprise. The daring thrusts which delighted Napoleon—the complete disappearance of a whole Army from view, which occurred more than once in 1870, was now almost impossible. The more credit is therefore due to the generalship of von Kluck, who, in the last ten days of August, broke up the

French line at Namur, thence assailed the British on the right, while, simultaneously, springing on Sir John French a powerful encircling movement between his left and the sea. The success was due not only to the fact that the Germans were in greatly superior force, but also to the concealment of their strength. The French reported that the British would encounter one German Army Corps, or at most two with possibly a division of cavalry. The patrols and aeroplanes of the British bore out this estimate. Yet, at the very moment when the Generals at the front were thus officially in the dark, the line of Germany's advance was boldly indicated in a newspaper map which told London the truth.

On Sunday, the 23rd of August, exactly a month after the Serbian Ultimatum, the blow fell. At six o'clock in the morning, Sir John French had consulted his commanding officers and arranged for the disposition of his two Army Corps and the 5th Cavalry Brigade. The concentration of his forces had only been achieved two days before, and the third Army Corps had yet to arrive. During the afternoon, grave trouble was suspected, and at 5 p.m. a message arrived from General Joffre. Instead of one, or at most two, Army Corps, there were advancing against the British three corps frontally, and a fourth on the outer flank, while to the right, the fifth French Army was in retreat before the Germans, who had crossed the Sambre between Charleroi and Namur, where the fortress had collapsed under bombardment.

Within twenty-four hours, French's contemptible little Army was fighting, often one against four, against 330,000 picked German troops.

Sir John French beat no hasty retreat. Through that Sunday night he awaited the inevitable onset. For five days his Generals were engaged in desperate rearguard actions. He withdrew a distance of about 100 miles. On Monday evening it was clear that the enemy intended to drive him into Mauberge as Bazaine was driven into Metz. On Tuesday, therefore, the Army retired to Le Cateau, and the scattered cavalry were again collected into two brigades. On Wednesday, the first Corps were fighting until 3.30 in the afternoon, but managed to break off the action after inflicting and receiving terrible losses. Finally, on Friday, the Army rested at Noyon, at the outer approaches to Paris itself. To British ears, accustomed to war on a small scale, the losses of 12,000 seemed large. But the authorities were relieved that the affair should have terminated with the Army still in being, and the ranks again filled up with reinforcements.

For the German people these were days of triumph. Belgium was devastated. Louvain was in flames. The French Army of the Meuse had been driven headlong back to the Marne. Amiens, with its sister cathedral to Rheims, was briefly occupied. Abbeville, with another cathedral, was threatened. With good fortune, Rouen itself would be bombarded. To the Crown Princess the Emperor William telegraphed :

"My most sincere thanks, my dear child. I rejoice with you in Wilhelm's first victory. How magnificently God supported him! Thanks and honour be to Him."

"Victory after victory!" wired the Emperor of Austria. "God is with you. He will also be with us. . . . I must sincerely congratulate you, dear friend; also the young heroes, your dear son, the Crown Prince, and the Crown Prince Rupprecht, as well as the incomparably brave German Army." A few days later the Head of the Hapsburgs decorated the Head of the Hohenzollerns with an Order founded by Maria Theresa!

In England the public were puzzled. As in the dark days of 1870, so now, people talked mysteriously of trapping the Germans and thus ending the war. The bulletins communicated to Parliament were brief, but they were enough to end this prattle. When the retreat was over, the Sunday edition of a daily newspaper boldly promulgated disaster. The nation learnt "the pitiful story" of "straggling units," "the flotsam and jetsam of the fiercest fight in history," of broken regiments and annihilated battalions. The Government sternly repudiated the disclosures, but could not deny that they were approved and indeed edited by Mr. F. E. Smith, the head of the Press Bureau, who added a suitable quotation in Latin. The revelations erred in applying to the whole British line the painful observations recorded at points of greatest pressure. Mr. Smith, who was in the peculiar position of holding

what was in effect a Government Office, while situated on the front Opposition bench, defended himself warmly. But it was clear that he had run up against another strenuous personality, Lord Kitchener himself, who, if he had had his way, would have abolished newspapers altogether. Mr. Smith handed back his responsibility to the Cabinet and, if the phrase be permitted, retired to the front, where he held a Commission.

The dispatch in which Sir John French unfolded his narrative was a masterpiece of military prose. It is due to two great nations to add that it aroused no public controversy. But, none the less, there were things which had to be said. On the 25th of August the war had been in progress for three weeks. France had three million men liable for mobilisation. It was remarkable that within her own territory she should have left a British Army, thus entirely unsupported to sustain the main German invasion. Twice did Sir John French appeal to General Sordet for co-operation. This officer had three divisions of cavalry in billets at Avesnes. Yet despite this fact, he pleaded that his horses were too tired to turn out. No effective assistance was forthcoming until the British Commander had rendered himself independent of it.

In Great Britain the desire that France should prevail against the aggressor checked any tendency to dwell upon regrettable incidents in the story. But Sir John French was responsible for the safety of the British Army, and unless there was to be

chivalrous working between the Allies, he would have had no choice but to retire to his bases on the coast. He did not, in his dispatch, suggest any criticism of General Joffre's masterly withdrawal to the Marne. But we may assume that, as a result of the retreat from Mons, a somewhat different value was placed both upon British leadership and upon the efficiency of British troops. It was no longer possible for friend or foe to hold our voluntary army in light esteem.

Two months after Mons, the most illustrious of living Frenchmen honoured England with a noble recognition of her sacrifices. Twenty masterpieces by M. Rodin were on exhibition in London. "I was charmed," wrote the sculptor, "to find how well they were displayed. The English and the French are brothers; your soldiers are fighting side by side with ours. As a little token of my admiration for your heroes, I decided to present the collection to England. That is all."

We leave the Germans at the gates of Paris. On a later page we will record the preservation of that great and fascinating city.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE DEFENCE OF PARIS

IN her long and stirring history, Paris has suffered the horrors of civil war, a religious massacre, red revolution, counter-revolution, *coup-d'état*, foreign occupations, and slow hunger. Not one of these experiences, neither the Commune, the Terror, nor St. Bartholomew's itself, could be compared with the menace which confronted the city in September 1914. The Germans, who were pressed for time, proposed to carry the forts not by siege, but by storm, and to occupy the city not in a formal manner, but administratively, as Brussels was occupied, and Antwerp. The bombardment, which would precede capture, could not be limited to outer fortifications. Projectiles of a destructiveness that the world had never known would rain upon the inhabitants, and desperate conflicts would be fought out in the streets. What the fate of the civil population would have been, we can only conjecture; but it is probable that by deliberate acts of policy, they would have been humbled to the dust, looted, blackmailed, and subjected to every refinement of provocative insult. If a high-

spirited people, accustomed to the barricade, had retaliated, however mildly, the answer, according to the precedents approved by Prussia, would have been slaughter and incendiarism. In any case, the machinery of Government would have been seized. The banks would have been plundered. Leading citizens would have been arrested. Thousands of able-bodied men would have been transported, as from other conquered districts, to what the Speaker of the House of Commons called “slavery” under German task-masters. And for generations to come, such hate would have been engendered as no expiation could have wiped out.

Even this catalogue does not exhaust the perils to which Paris was exposed. Most possibly the French themselves would have had to recapture their own capital after a bombardment which would have inflicted yet further damage, or, worse still, the explosion of mines, laid for revenge as in Brussels, under all the public buildings of the metropolis. The population affected was about three millions. No crime of any kind was or could be alleged against the Government responsible for this population. Yet this complete and admitted innocence was to be no defence against the proposed punishment. The offence of Paris was the offence of France—that she still existed.

The German Government made no secret of the view that what they meditated was retaliation. In 1806, Napoleon Buonaparte had marched in triumph through Berlin, and it was not until 1813

that the dismembered kingdom of Prussia rose in revolt against the Corsican. In 1913 the centenary of that deliverance was celebrated by the Hohenzollerns with an ostentatious defiance of the French which, even at the time, alarmed M. Cambon, the Ambassador of the Republic. Doubtless it takes long for a proud nation to forget an attack upon its integrity, but was Europe to assume that Prussia would never abandon this feud ? Twice, within two years, had she shared the satisfaction of driving Buonaparte into exile. Hers as much as England's was the glory of Waterloo. Prussia could, in addition, celebrate Sedan Day with bonfires while France mourned for her lost provinces. Was this not sufficient expiation of Napoleon's progress down the Unter den Linden and the remoter perfidies of Louis XIV.? It is a grave reflection on the rulers of Germany that they so enflamed the old sore that the people demanded yet another sacrifice. How readily would we believe that the din of battle clears the air and makes for friendship ! History, by a hundred examples, teaches us the opposite. Louis XIV. ravaged the Palatinate and seized Strassburg. Buonaparte humiliated Prussia. Germany retaliated against Napoleon's nephew. The nephew disappears, but not the quarrel, and when Paris cries out against the destruction of Rheims, the retort of "the Huns" is a photograph of Heidelberg, with the Castle still shattered by French cannon balls. And the future—what, again, of the future ? Who dared to look forward ?

It has been said of Germany that in two thousand years her religion has not changed,—that Christianity was for her merely an interlude which has been followed by a reversion to Odin and Thor. There is certainly a curious continuity in the Prussian tradition, whether in ethics, war, or diplomacy. One hundred years ago the English, when occupying France, “ behaved ”—according to Thiers—“ with perfect propriety and with absolute respect for public and private property.” But the excesses of the Prussians were notorious, and when complaints were made to Blücher, he replied cheerfully, “ That is all they have done ; they ought to have done much more.” Even London, which welcomed Blücher as a friend and an ally, was described by him as an incomparable city to sack. In 1870, Prussia was once more on her best behaviour. An appeal from Queen Victoria saved Paris from outrage. Being easily and completely victorious, the Germans had no reason to offend the public opinion of Christendom. But, forty years later, the spirit of Blücher, unashamed and unblushing, was abroad in Europe. We read of Poles burying their boots at the approach of the Kaiser’s soldiers. “ *Pauvre Hôtel de Ville, adieu,* ” wrote a young girl in her diary, after watching the German shells raining upon Arras. The ancient market of Ypres was deliberately demolished. Over a wide area, houses were stripped of furniture and valuables, and factories of raw materials, while the removal of this loot for sale in Germany was a recognised

department of the Emperor's finance. In 1870 the destruction of one village, Bazeilles, created a sensation. Zola based a novel on it; yet even he did not allege massacre. Those civilians alone were shot in whose hands arms were found. But in 1914 a hundred villages perished with scarcely a notice, and thousands of civilians, indeed tens of thousands, were slaughtered in cold blood, and this was the warning that reached Paris. Napoleon's method was cruel enough, but he did not descend to these depths. On the 26th of April 1796 this was his Proclamation to the Army of Italy :

“ All will wish when returning to their villages to be able to say with pride : I belonged to the conquering Army of Italy. Friends, I promise you this conquest, but there is one condition which you must swear to fulfil. That is, to respect the people whom you deliver. Without that you would not be the deliverers of Peoples, you would be their scourge ! You would not be the honour of the French people, it would disown you ! Your victories, your courage, the blood of your brothers fallen in battle, all would be lost, even honour and glory. As for me, and the Generals who have your confidence, we should blush to command an Army without discipline, without restraint, knowing no law but force. . . . I will not permit that brigands soil your laurels. I shall have rigorously executed the procedure I have ordered. Looters will be pitilessly shot.”

To Napoleon, war was still an art.

An incident quickly revealed what was in store for the French capital. The Church of Notre-Dame was remote from fortifications. On one side lay

the ancient Hôtel Dieu, a hospital consecrated to healing. Near by were the Courts devoted to Justice, with the Sainte Chapelle enshrined within. Beyond was the Morgue, the last refuge of despair. When from a German aeroplane a bomb dropped on the roof of Notre-Dame, for what other building of military significance could it have been intended ? It was shameless sacrilege, against religion, against art, against history. Sismondi had said that the Germans, if they enter France, will not leave her “ until she is as though the fire of heaven had passed over her.” On this occasion there was no Duke of Wellington, no Queen Victoria, to curb the natural instincts of the Hohenzollern family and of their Generals.

The capital of Belgium saved itself for the time by adopting the simple doctrine of non-resistance. Brussels turned her cheek to the smiter. For Paris such a course, however much there might be in prudence to recommend it, was unthinkable. A collapse at this point would have meant the end of France as a great Power. The city was placed under a military commander, General Gallieni, and martial law was declared. Great herds of cattle browsed in the parks. Within the line of fire, buildings were demolished and trees were felled. The Venus de Milo and other treasures of the Louvre were encased in steel and hidden away. It was a wise precaution. The Director of the Royal Museums in Prussia did not deny that he was the receiver of stolen works of art, but he excused himself by explaining that

these things were safer with him than they would have been if they had remained with those to whom they belonged, which is doubtless the burglar's argument all the world over.

There was no attempt to conceal from the Parisians the gravity of the facts. On the contrary, the seat of the reorganised Government was transferred to Bordeaux, and Paris knew, by the parallel of 1870 and the more recent example of Antwerp, that the removal of the archives signified the hour of supreme trial. "To endure and to fight"—that was the President's manifesto. "A nation," said his Cabinet, "which does not desire to perish, and which, wishing to live, recoils neither before sufferings nor sacrifices, is sure of conquering." The people thus encouraged remained loyal to the Republic, and calm. On the last occasion when Germans had approached the Department of the Seine, the Empress Eugénie and her advisers had been compelled, by fear of revolution, to dispatch Macmahon to Sedan, in order that it might appear as if the tide of war had rolled eastwards. The Paris of 1914 was able to face realities. The generals in the field had no need to sacrifice their armies to a futile political subterfuge.

It was on the German side that at this crisis politics interfered with strategy. What Germany had been offered by her rulers was a war in which all the fighting would take place on enemy soil. Aggression, by its very nature, assumes this. In 1870 the French cried "à Berlin." In 1914 the

Germans set out for Paris—Antwerp—Calais—Warsaw—London. It was the foreigners' towns that would disappear under shell fire; the foreigners' daughters who would be subjected to the customary insults; the foreigners' banks that would find the indemnity which would settle any liabilities incurred during the appropriation of the foreigners' provinces. All that the aggressor had to expect was a little temporary loss of trade; a casualty list which after all hardly modified the returns of the Registrar of births and deaths. In 1870 it was the Frenchman who had to be fed with illusions of victory. In 1914 the Frenchman faced the truth, and the great factory of false information was Berlin.

What good news it was! Lord Kitchener could secure no recruits. A darkened London had been bombarded with Zeppelins. Sheerness was in flames. Admiral Sir John Jellicoe, who commanded the Grand Fleet, was dead. Two great armies of Afghans, each hundreds of thousands strong, were attacking, the one Russia and the other India. Warsaw was occupied. There was no end to the thrilling announcements which Berlin was invited, week by week and month by month, to believe. The city was gay with flags and bunting. At night the streets and squares blazed with light. The 3rd of September being Sedan Day, was observed with especial exuberance. Though the Emperor's palace was dark, this was merely a symbol that the War Lord was at the front, doubtless in Paris by this time, and any

way scattering the Allies like chaff from the threshing-floor. State clergy, paid, like the professors, to preach State doctrine, delivered fervid discourses. Astonished journalists recorded that Berlin, imitating the Emperor, began once more to mention God, and this was described as a revival of faith. The humble and contrite heart may, perhaps, best be tested by the following authenticated outburst from Professor Adolph Lasson of the University :

"We are morally and intellectually superior to all, beyond comparison. The same holds true of our institutions. . . . Our Army is, so to speak, a reduced image of the intelligence and morality of the German people. We do good to all. Louvain was not destroyed ; we only burned the houses of murderers. Rheims Cathedral was not demolished ; it was the French who provoked the damage."

Not less revealing was the letter of an American wife of an Austrian diplomatist, a document, also challenged and authenticated. "C. and I," wrote this vivacious lady, "go round, doing the goose-step and shouting 'Deutschland über Alles.' We are having the time of our lives and both look rosy and years younger." While Paris, her population reduced from three and a half millions to two millions, sternly awaited her destiny, let us contemplate the moral and intellectual superiority of Professor Lasson and the goose-step as an ornament of Austrian diplomacy. "Berlin," wrote a resident, "the hurrying, doubling, nervous and

working town in which the stock and share list is more thoroughly studied than the list of Sunday Services—Berlin has become for the moment almost believing."

The Kaiser did not forget that Berlin was his capital. Whatever might be the condition of Hamburg or Munich, Berlin at any rate must be kept content. Prices were regulated. Relief, where needed, was forthcoming. Optimism was well maintained. But, suddenly, there appeared at the railway stations a multitude of unfortunate people whose witness could not be concealed. The refugees from East Prussia brought with them little save their handbags, but that little included the truth. Before the war had been in progress a month, the Slav had crossed the frontier, had shattered the German lines, and was already preparing to invest Königsberg, the ancient city where the first Hohenzollern king received his crown.

At this development the bureaucracy trembled. The population of East Prussia was 2 millions only, that is, two-thirds of the population of Paris, less than a third of that of Belgium, and not half the population of those districts in France which have been desolated by war. The damage to East Prussia was about 20 millions—not one-tenth of the destruction already accomplished by Germany in the West. But the Emperor feared lest even this slight sacrifice—this first disillusionment—should undermine the stability of the political system on which his throne was based.

East Prussia was the sacred stronghold of Junkerdom. There were concentrated those feudal forces which denied to the big cities the boon of an effective franchise. At all costs these landed estates must be cleared of the enemy and their owners compensated. At a moment when every available soldier should have supported and driven home the advance upon Paris, and when every pfennig was wanted for the war, formidable forces were hurried eastwards, and a repatriation loan was floated. The audacious Rennankampf was hurled back and his army overwhelmed. An apparent disaster, comparable with Sedan, was inflicted on Czardom. In Berlin the flags again fluttered and the bells again rang. But Paris was saved, and with her France.

What happened before Paris may be thus suggested. Germany was like a pugilist, striking with two fists. The reach of the right arm just fell short of the opposing body. The blow of the left was parried. To interpret the simile, Von Kluck, breathlessly hurrying after the British, found himself out of touch with supplies and ammunition, and wavered therefore in his onset. The Crown Prince, to the south, failed to get through and, as it were, keep his appointment, as arranged by Von Moltke. The two wings of the German advance were thus separated, and either by itself could have been crushed. A concentration was essential, and it involved the disastrous battle of the Marne.

The strategy of that great fight was General

Joffre's. The skill with which he drew on the enemy until he could take the offensive with overwhelming forces, has been justly praised. A fact not less important was the correctitude of his demeanour towards the Republic. There is a story that someone said to him, "General, do you know that you have won the greatest battle on record ?" He answered, "What interests me is how soon I may return to my little house among the Pyrenees." The picture which perhaps best expresses the simplicity of this man is of the lady hotel-keeper, with tears in her eyes, because having prepared so tender a pullet for the generalissimo, he would dine on nothing save an omelette. It was well for France that, when her dark hour came, the man of her choice should be, not a Boulanger or other adventurer of the Royalist or Buonapartist type, but a staunch Republican, sternly resolved on his duty.

In the French Yellow Book, M. de Faramond, the naval attaché at Berlin, quotes Prince von Donnersmark as saying of the French :

"I am convinced that you would be beaten, and for the following reasons. In spite of the brilliant qualities which I admit belong to the French and which I admire, you are not precise. By precision I do not mean the fact of arriving punctually at an appointment. I mean punctuality in every sense of the word. The Frenchman, who has great facility for work, is not as punctual as the German in the accomplishment of his duties."

At the battle of the Marne it was impossible

for the British, worn out with weeks of fighting, to pursue the enemy to the frontier. At the river Aisne it was for the French with their unexhausted army to follow through with a second staggering blow. Enough to record that they did not arrive in time. The Germans were able to dig themselves in and hold as their own for months what a mathematician described as 3 per cent. of French territory. Paris was saved, and in due course became once more the seat of Government. Berlin was bitterly disappointed. But the combatants were condemned to the great siege battle which had not ended at Christmas.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE SURE SHIELD

IN approaching the naval aspect of the war we are at once confronted by a question of supreme interest to the historian. When the month of July 1914 began the world was, as we have seen, wrapt in peace. Why then were the fleets of Great Britain mobilised in the Channel, not as a preliminary to the usual manœuvres, but ostensibly for a review by the Sovereign ? The result of that concentration was momentous. However its units might be disposed, the Navy was undoubtedly predominant over any rival. But if there had been a German mobilisation in advance of war, without a British mobilisation to counter it, Admiral von Tirpitz would have been tempted to try immediate issues in the North Sea. In the end, his Navy would doubtless have been destroyed. Germany and Austria had only 64 big battleships, built and building, against 132 built and building by the Allies. But, none the less, the Kaiser's Navy might have achieved a vital object. By holding in dispute, even for three weeks, the absolute command of the Channel, it

might have delayed the transport of the Expeditionary Force. That delay, if effected, would have prevented the great rearguard action whereby, from Mons backwards, Sir John French protected the Allied left and saved General Joffre from a crushing disaster. In other words, the preparedness of the British Navy, which swept from the Channel not hostile battleships only, but submarines and floating mines, was an essential factor in the arrangements which shielded Paris from the invader.

Whence came the hint that put the Admiralty in motion? The familiar rumour was that the Allies owed much to a calculated indiscretion at Rome. It is a rumour in itself by no means improbable. But in November 1914 the veil was lifted by the publication in London of the French Yellow Book. The documents there collected show that since March 1913, that is, for fifteen months before the war, France had been receiving information which in her opinion clearly pointed to Germany's intention to provoke Europe.

At that date M. Jules Cambon was the French Ambassador in Berlin. In his confidential reports he commented upon the zeal with which the Emperor's Government worked up hatred against France by recalling memories of 1813, a century earlier. The observations of his military and naval attachés, which he forwarded to Paris, emphasise Germany's chagrin at her rebuff over Morocco, and her growing anger against what Renan called "the eternal power of renaissance

and resurrection" manifested by France. M. de Faramond, the naval attaché, included in his communication a singularly prescient analysis of the financial situation in Germany. In January 1912 she had borrowed 500 million marks; in March 1913 the loan was 350 millions. On acquired wealth, a levy of 1000 millions was to be imposed, and M. de Faramond remarks:

"If we take note of the fact that the German Government is endeavouring to prevent this enormous tax from being paid in several instalments, and if, as is stated by some newspapers, the entire payment must be made before 1st July 1914 we get a formidable hint, for nothing can explain such haste on the part of the military authorities to have a liquid war treasure of one milliard in their chest."

The "formidable hint" was as a bow drawn at a venture. July 1914 was in M. de Faramond's opinion the critical month. He said it more than a year in advance. The Sarajevo murders, with the police withdrawn, were a timely coincidence.

M. Cambon also enclosed what he calls "an official and secret report dealing with the strengthening of the German Army." This document is anonymous, but he guarantees its source. It is written by some German personage, and it is not repudiated. Two passages are here pertinent, of which every sentence of the first invites careful notice:

"The idea that our armaments are a reply to the armaments and the policy of the French must

be *instilled into the people*. The people must be accustomed to think that an offensive war on our part is a necessity if we are to combat the adversary's provocations. We must *act with prudence in order to arouse no suspicion*, and so as to avoid the crises which might damage our economic life. Things must be so managed that under the weighty impression of powerful armaments, of considerable sacrifices, and of political tension, an outbreak (*Loss-schlagen*) shall be considered as a deliverance, because after it would come decades of peace and of prosperity, such as those which followed 1870. The war must be prepared for from a financial point of view. There is much to be done in this direction. *The distrust of our financiers must not be aroused*, but nevertheless there are many things which it will be impossible to hide."

The criminality of these calculated deceptions, not of Frenchmen but of Germans themselves, is summed up in this short sentence :

"*An ultimatum, with brief delay, followed immediately by invasion, would enable us to justify our action sufficiently from the point of view of international law.*"

Once more, the events of July are precisely foreshadowed.

With this Yellow Book there was disclosed a still more startling premonition. In the autumn of 1913 the Emperor William discussed matters personally with King Albert. "From an absolutely sure source," M. Cambon learned, broadly, what passed between the Sovereigns. The Emperor "appeared overwrought and irritable."

King Albert "found him completely changed." He had "ceased to be a partisan of peace." King Albert was much alarmed, and at his instance the Belgian Parliament, after a secret session, undertook too late the reorganisation of his Army.

A third disclosure completes this record of what, without exaggeration, may be called an infamous conspiracy against Europe. Speaking in December 1914, Signor Giolitti, the Italian statesman, told the world that a year before—that is, in 1913—Germany had asked Italy to support an attack upon Serbia, for whom an ultimatum, like that of July, was ready. Italy declined to be an accomplice, and, when the real ultimatum was issued, she was not consulted.

Consider, then, the position at the British Admiralty. Belgium, France, and Italy had for a year or more known certainly that Germany meditated a war without notice. Is it any wonder that Mr. Churchill, who cannot have been in entire ignorance, laid before the Cabinet estimates of nearly 60 millions and secured a vote of 53 millions? And is not the concentration of the fleet also sufficiently explained? It is perhaps worth recording that some days before the war Germany cut the cable to Jamaica, while her cruisers, scattered over the world, were informed in advance about friendly ports, persons, and ships which would replenish their stocks of coal. Thus may we explain the situation in the Channel, which was afterwards described officially in the Navy List as follows :

"By a stroke of Providence the main strength of the Navy had, only a few days before war broke out, been assembled for a test mobilisation and exercise, so that when the situation became grave it was even in a greater condition of readiness than in normal times. . . ."

The stroke of Providence was not unaffected by the wit of man.

The British Navy entered upon its task under the inspiration of an incomparable past. Patriotic songs are always arrogant, but there was this at least to be said for "Rule Britannia," that whereas "Deutschland über Alles" was a claim to govern the universe, the English by their chorus merely annexed the waves. If for a century that dictatorship had been unchallenged, it was because it had been administered as a trust, not for Britain's benefit alone, but in the interests of all who peacefully traversed the ocean. The British Navy stamped out piracy and killed the oversea slave trade. By castigating Algiers, it liberated 1200 Christians from a cruel captivity. At Navarino our ships, in a somewhat accidental manner, assisted the establishment of Greece. The bombardment of Alexandria was drastic medicine, but it opened up a reign of law in Egypt under which that country has prospered more bountifully than at any previous period in its chequered history. The commercial rights which the fleet upheld in China doubtless included the now discontinued opium trade, but weighing up the record, good and bad together, we may fairly assert that the British

Navy has, like the London policeman, stood silently, a guardian of peace and of law. Not once has this predominance on the ocean been used for aggression against a civilised state. Nor has any British Administration, of either political colour, endeavoured to associate with the Navy a conscript army which might be regarded as a menace on the Continent of Europe. The influence of the fleet upon Germany has been entirely pacific. In 1911 the fear of our ships was an element in the causes which prevented war, and it is possible that in 1914 also this calamity would have been averted if Germany had fully realised that England's intervention would be inevitable.

A glance at the British penny long showed that while Britannia held the trident she also built the lighthouse. In all the varied attempts to preserve life and property at sea, by the buoy and the rocket, the lifebelt and the Plimsoll mark, Great Britain bore if not an exclusive at least an honourable part. It was from Greenwich that time was reckoned and longitude calculated. The *Nautical Almanac*, which was of service all over the world, appeared as a London compilation. In the design of steamships, the standard of discipline for crews, the observance of the rules of navigation, and the conduct of the Court of Admiralty, Great Britain displayed on the whole a high sense of responsibility, and her decisions were seldom challenged. It was not the opinion of the world that her policy for the ocean had been oppressive, or that the welfare of nations

would be increased if her long guardianship of the carrying trade were brought to an abrupt conclusion. When there arose the test case of the Panama Canal, the United States, under the enlightened guidance of President Wilson, could not hope to do more than adopt that perfect equality of tolls which had been for generations the rule at Suez. In developing their own fleets, whether naval or commercial, Germany, Japan, and other Powers could only accept the ripe results of British experience.

Peacefully and without friction, this long supremacy of the ocean was coming, if not to an end, at least to certain reasonable limits. In the Yellow Sea, Japan, and not Great Britain, was the greatest naval power. The shores of America were guarded, not by the British Navy, but by the United States. Even in the Mediterranean, where lay the shortest route to India, Great Britain only maintained the one-power standard. Under Lord Fisher her fleets were concentrated in home waters. Such concentration might be objectionable to Germany, but it did at least dispose of the complaint that a domineering England wished by her battleships to lord it over the world. Against this contention we may set the plain facts that it took three months to capture the *Emden*, four months and a bad defeat before the Pacific squadron of Admiral von Spee was sunk, while the *Goeben* and *Breslau*, with serious results for the future of the Near East, escaped to Constantinople.

The truth about the Navy was that as yet it had

never been tested in war. It was as much an experiment as the German Navy itself. Doubtless Nelson won great victories, but to argue from Trafalgar to Heligoland was as absurd as to argue from Hastings to Ypres. The Dreadnought was not even an immediate child of the wooden battleship. It was a remote descendant, separated from its picturesque ancestor by numerous generations. Metal had replaced wood. A few large guns, loaded at the breech by machinery, supplanted the old broadside of many small guns, loaded at the muzzle by hand. There was long range instead of short range, steam instead of sail, screw instead of paddle-wheel, turbine instead of screw, oil instead of coal. Nor was there any experience by other navies on which either Germany or Britain could base a forecast. The battles of Shushima and of Santiago were useless for comparison. No parallel could be drawn between the German and British Navies and the ill-found coffin ships which Russia and Spain dispatched to their doom.

The conflict was the more uncertain because of the unprecedented destructiveness of modern projectiles. The old three-decker might be battered to bits, and its cockpit might swim with blood. But there was no one blow that would finish its career, and often it was boarded before it was captured. But the Admiral of to-day goes into action with the consciousness that no armour ever milled can withstand the repeated impact of big gun-fire. Victory lies with the crew which,

by a quick and sure finding of the range, gets in the first blows. A few minutes decides the contest, and the battleship which hesitates is lost. Victory and defeat are alike absolute. The ship that wins may lose scarcely a man. The ship that is beaten goes almost inevitably to the bottom, with most, if not all, of her crew. To the civilian spectator, who from some cliff watches a duel between two cruisers, the sight may seem less terrible than what he reads of war on land. The grey and quivering vessels conceal the agony of the struggle which rends them. But look for a moment within their conning towers and their turrets. The armour which is designed to exclude a hostile shell serves as an added peril to the crew if once it be pierced. When the projectile explodes, the fragments, instead of flying freely to a safe distance, rebound within a confined space, until the decks are as shambles. The condition of the *Emden*, when at last she was cornered, cannot be described, and no language does justice to the horror of other victories—men in the last stages of mutilation, struggling for breath among the waves which are stained with the blood from their open wounds.

The terrors of big gun-fire were formidable enough, but at least they were visible to the eye and audible to the ear. But the torpedo was a weapon that could be neither heard nor seen. As long as it was only discharged from ships that steamed on the surface of the ocean, the experts held that it could be kept at a distance by the

use of long-range guns and quick-firers. But when the torpedo was associated with the submarine, and submarines were constructed with power to cruise for thousands of miles, even Sir Percy Scott, the apostle of the all-big-gun Dreadnought, expressed the view that the day of the battleship was over. A vessel, however modern and well armoured, is, if fairly holed by a torpedo, fatally crippled. It was held that Sir Percy Scott put the case too high. He argued too definitely from the experience gained in recent manœuvres. Still, we are confronted by the bare fact that in the first twenty weeks of the war, which is the period under our consideration, ships of the line were not once in action against one another. The *Lion*, a super-Dreadnought, finished off some smaller craft at the battle of Heligoland. The *Goeben*, a Dreadnought cruiser, roamed for a while over the Black Sea, and was battered. Certain German vessels of the same powerful type battered the east coast, while the *Invincible* and *Inflexible* broke up Germany's cruiser squadron in the Pacific. But, if we except these incidents,—none of them duels between ships of the largest size against each other,—we find that the naval campaign, on which depended the fate of the Empire, was for five long months like a game of chess, in which both players cautiously put forth their pawns and reserved their major pieces. The score or two of vessels which fell victim in this guerrilla fighting were cruisers, destroyers, or submarines of a subordinate type. The *Bulwark*

was doubtless a pre-Dreadnought ship of the line, but the appalling fate which in three minutes overwhelmed her at Sheerness was due to an explosion in her magazine, mysterious doubtless in origin, yet clearly to be distinguished from warfare on the high seas. If any other battleship was lost, a matter on which we would not care to speak with certainty, the calamity was due to other perils than gun-fire. It was a mine or torpedo that cost us the *Formidable*.

The submarine told in favour of the weaker naval power. On the one hand, Great Britain was compelled to maintain a superiority in super-Dreadnoughts which cost 2½ millions sterling apiece. On the other hand, she knew that under certain conditions these vessels were at the mercy of craft which her enemy could construct and maintain at a mere fraction of that cost, whether in men or in money. It was necessary for Great Britain to blockade the German coast, including Heligoland and the mouth of the Kiel Canal. Yet a close blockade by large ships would have been accompanied inevitably by a succession of disasters which would have reduced the British margin of safety to nil, while leaving the German fleets in being. In one day, three cruisers—the *Cressy*, the *Aboukir*, and the *Hogue*—were sunk by submarines. Two of them encountered their fate through standing by to rescue their comrades in the third. Although they were old cruisers of low speed, this fact did not imply that their complements of officers and men

were small. More than 2000 men perished, and it was laid down by the Admiralty that for the future the time-honoured custom of the sea, whereby every effort is made by friend and foe to save the drowning, must be modified. The only safeguard against submarines is that ships should keep on moving quickly, and even this safeguard will be weakened if some submarine should be constructed which can alter the aim of its torpedo tube without cumbrously changing its own direction.

There were other as yet undetermined factors in the naval war. Never before had the Admiralty been faced by aircraft, able theoretically to drop bombs on battleships. In the period under review, no such incident happened, but it was a possibility not to be dismissed in advance, and, with the British raid on Cuxhaven, there opened a period of great aerial activity. In the concentration and dispersal of squadrons, and in the locating of the enemy, wireless telegraphy was of immense value. Captain von Müller, of the *Emden*, captured a substantial merchantman by asking the innocent question whether she had seen his own ship. An important element in Admiral von Spee's victory off Coronel was that he jammed the wireless messages by which Admiral Cradock was summoning the *Canopus* to his aid. The destruction of a wireless station was the lure that drew the *Emden* to Cocos Island, and so led to her destruction. The same object was achieved by the British raid on Togoland. Both in Ecuador

and Colombia the use of wireless stations by German operators led to diplomatic protests on behalf of Great Britain, the evasion of which by the Powers concerned was followed by an appeal to the United States. The breaches of neutrality could not be seriously denied, and undoubtedly great assistance was rendered to the enemy, who did not hesitate to use Robinson Crusoe's island as a coaling station. It is not easy to realise that when the twentieth century opened, only fifteen years before, neither submarines, aircraft, nor wireless would have seriously troubled the strategists—so rapid had been the absorption of human ingenuity into the practice of naval war.

But a still graver hazard has to be mentioned. In the long Victorian Era it had been assumed without question that the British seaman is more than a match for the seaman of any other navy. This comfortable calculation had been in fact upset by the rise of the Japanese and American fleets, which were unsurpassed for sailor-like efficiency. What, then, would be the showing of the British seaman when pitted against the new German service ? The sailor of tradition, like his officer, had long disappeared. The race of ruddy-complexioned Admirals, whose portraits adorned the walls of picture galleries and the fireplaces of country houses, had vanished with the old coaching days. The idea that you could win a sea-fight by using the pressgang to improvise a crew, and then inspiring that crew with grog,

did not survive the application of machinery to ocean-going vessels. Just as the driver on his box-seat, with his ready wit and his instinct for horseflesh, was succeeded by the engine-driver, whose chief anxiety is his eyesight, so there arose a new race of seamen, men who had to live soberly, men of steady hand and keen eye ; specialists, most of them, in gunnery, engineering, or some other branch of their highly skilled industry, with officers whose sharp-featured, clean-shaven countenances were stamped by an incessant vigilance. This was the new British Navy.

The concentration in home waters brought both officers and seamen into closer contact with their homes. With improved but still meagre pay, the man afloat maintained a wife and children ashore. His mental outlook was very much that of a mechanic or carpenter, and in defending his country he was in a new sense defending those blessings which he himself shared. The German Navy was recruited, in part at any rate, by conscription, and the men joined as adults. In the British Navy the aim was still to catch boys while they were young, and inure them by years of training to the habits of the ocean. There was constant manoeuvring over the North Sea, which was already marked out as the battle area between the combatants. The nation believed profoundly that the Navy would, in the long run, prove itself efficient. Still, it could not be denied that the new conditions of warfare precisely suited the German type of mind. It was warfare in which

sportsmanship was useless without science. The Prussians had developed a marvellous machine for fighting on land. There was no reason to suppose that, for its size, their war machine would be less effective on the ocean. Nor was it. The skill with which Admiral von Spee drove Admiral Cradock into a bad light, and then destroyed him, was worthy of Nelson. The *Emden's* wanderings from Tsing-Tau *via* Bombay, her ruses and her disguises, recall the feats of Lord Charles Beresford. Nor could it be alleged against the German Navy that, when occasion offered, it failed to take great risks. Even Mr. Churchill, who had talked of digging the rats out of their hole, had to admit that the raid upon Scarborough, Whitby, and Hartlepool, however indefensible as war, involved the vessels concerned in grave peril of sudden destruction. If the encountering of danger be the sole test by which decorations are bestowed, the officers, who were justly branded as "babylkillers," did as much to earn their iron crosses as the majority of the príncipes and privates who, by tens of thousands—including the Kaiser himself—received this badge of valour. The most wonderful achievement of these four months of naval warfare was the excursion of Submarine B 11 up the Dardanelles. These famous straits are forty miles long, heavily mined and rendered difficult even for steamships by a strong outward current. To force that channel, sink a Turkish battleship, and escape alive from the guns of innumerable forts was indeed an exploit for which the Victoria

Cross—a more rarely bestowed honour than its German counterpart—was not too high a recognition. But the Germans on their side were not less daring. Their submarines visited Dover, and possibly other ports, and if their Grand Fleet was held in reserve, we must not suppose that lack of courage was the reason. Just as the Prussian Guard was flung at Ypres, regardless of danger, so at any moment might there be a desperate onslaught against Britain by the second of the world's navies.

The menace which was most dreaded by the ignorant was invasion. In demanding compulsory military service, Lord Roberts and the National Service League had in mind the possibility that the Germans, by landing a force of, say, 70,000 men on these shores, would paralyse Great Britain, shatter her credit, dislocate her industries, occupy London, and wreck her operations on the Continent of Europe. When war came, the Committee of Imperial Defence, strengthened by the addition to its numbers of Mr. Balfour, was reconsidering the question whether voluntary enlistment was adequate as a protection against these risks. The Defence Committee was Mr. Balfour's own creation. It was the first definite association of the Navy and Army, not only with one another, but also with other departments of a more pacific nature. In 1905, Mr. Balfour, strongly influenced by Lord Fisher, had formally dismissed the idea of invasion as impossible. The early experience of the great war showed that he was right.

To land 70,000 German troops in this country would have been useless. The expedition, even if successful, would encounter five times its number of troops, Regulars and Territorials, who would be fighting in their own country, for their own homes, with an incomparable network of railways at their back. The transporting of the invaders would require vessels with an aggregate of 300,000 tonnage. These ships, of necessity unarmoured, would have to be convoyed. All the factors—submarines, wireless, aircraft, mines—which we have mentioned would tell against this Armada. The debarkation would occupy some hours during which the ships must be stationary, under attack from air, land, sea, and under the sea. The force, if landed, would be cut off absolutely from a base of supplies. Whatever outrages it might perpetrate, whatever damage it might inflict, it would be forced without much delay to surrender. We need not labour this argument. Enough to state that the invasion of England by Germany was not contemplated, and that England herself, though she was mistress of the North Sea, did not, during these critical months, attempt to land one soldier on the German coast.

Yet Germany never ceased to hope that somehow she would reach her hand across the English Channel. There is a delightful story that Berlin was permitted to witness *King Henry V.* because Shakespeare was a German who had the prevision to write :

“And then to Calais ; and to England then.”

General Baron von Ardenne gravely discussed the width of the silver strip which lay between the Emperor and Dover. Would not the 12-inch howitzers carry 14 of those miles ? And perhaps there might be still greater weapons in store for the English, to so extreme a length did the madness run. Suppose some gun, worthy of Jules Verne, had heaved a shell on to Folkestone beach, how would that conquer England ? And who could suppose that an undefeated—indeed, unengaged—British Navy would tolerate the monster ? The three monitors, designed for South American rivers, which crept up to the Dunes and enfiladed the German trenches, were a foretaste of what the surprise guns would have had to face.

What happened was ten times more dangerous to Britain than the bomb which fell on Dover or the shells which battered certain seaside resorts. No ship sails without insurance for hull and cargo. On the 28th of July marine rates were about 5s. per £100, or one four-hundredth of the value insured. Three days later the rates had risen to 60s. or 80s. On the 4th of August insurance cost 10 to 15 guineas per cent. On the 6th of August the rate was 20 guineas, or more than one-fifth of the insured property. Although hulls and cargoes are separately insured, the whole charge falls economically on the latter, for the shipowner naturally fixes freights at a figure that will cover him for all his costs, including insurance of the vessel which carries the goods. The real insurance of goods was thus much higher than 20 guineas, and, to put the

case in a sentence, it was prohibitive. The position in August was that whereas the Government commandeered the whole mercantile marine which happened to be in home ports, the vessels in foreign ports, which ought to have sailed to this country, were held up. Doubtless the shipowners surrendered to the general panic and confusion. Yet they were not to be blamed. They had no means of knowing definitely how many enemy cruisers were abroad. As battleships these cruisers might not be very formidable, but as commerce destroyers they could with the feeblest armament overhaul and crush an indefinite number of merchantmen. The *Emden* alone, a cruiser of the third class, accounted for twenty-five prizes with a gross tonnage of over 100,000 tons, and one result of her activities was a shortage of tea in London during October.

The British Government stepped in promptly to save the situation. On the hulls of ships, which the owners were in the habit of insuring by a kind of co-operative fund, the State accepted 80 per cent. of the risk. For cargoes, a War Risks Office was opened at which insurances were effected at a maximum of 5 guineas per cent. On the 7th of August the rate fell to 4 guineas, and on the 14th of August to 3 guineas. At Lloyd's the usual business was resumed, and with curious results. On cargoes carried in British bottoms it was useless to charge a higher rate than that fixed by the Government. The client could end the matter by taking his bargain from Lloyd's

to the War Risks Office. But if the cargo were carried in a neutral ship, the War Risks Office would undertake no responsibility, and the broker could charge for insurance as much as he could get. It thus happened that neutral insurances were often double the insurances of British cargoes, this despite the fact that Britain was a belligerent. To the man in the street the defeat of Admiral von Spee off the Falkland Islands resolved itself into the disappearance of five German vessels of war with 33,000 aggregate tonnage, leaving only four still to be rounded up. To the financiers and traders of Great Britain and America the event was summed up in one simple announcement: Admiral Sturdee had reduced insurance rates from  $2\frac{1}{2}$  guineas to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  guineas.

Let us for the moment interpret this figure. It meant that, with the exception of the Black Sea, the Baltic, and the North Sea, the whole world was again open for shipping. More than half the carrying trade of the world was conducted by Great Britain, and Great Britain thus levied her usual toll, not only on goods brought to and from her own shores, but also on goods exchanged by nations thousands of miles distant. Her chief competitor was removed. Many German ships were captured as prizes. But of far greater importance to Germany was the fact that the rest were laid up useless, either in her own or in neutral ports. President Wilson considered whether his Government ought not to purchase the thirty German liners interned in New York.

It was pointed out to him that such purchase would be, in fact if not in form, a breach of neutrality, since it would furnish Germany with gold in exchange for assets which the British Navy had sterilised. But even if the ships had been bought, their continuous earning capacity would have been transferred from Germany to a Power which, although neutral, was friendly to Great Britain. The position at the end of November was that out of 10,123 British steamships of more than 100 tons, 49 had been captured; 75 were detained in German ports and 71 were held up in the Baltic and Black Sea, while 9928 were still plying. Thus only 195 steamships had ceased to be available and 98·1 per cent. were of use. If we express these facts in terms of tonnage, we find that of 20,523,706 tons, 20,122,173 were still available, or 97·1 per cent. Contrast this result with the position of Germany. When the war began she had 2090 steamships, with a gross tonnage of 5,134,720 tons. Of these, 80 were captured; 166 were detained in British or Allied ports; 646 sought refuge in neutral ports; and 329 were lying idle in German ports. That is, 58·4 per cent. of German vessels were definitely accounted for. They were, on the average, the largest vessels, representing 4,584,928 gross tonnage, or 89·3 per cent. of the total carrying capacity. Of the rest, 10 were known to be at sea; 125 of over 500 tons were not accounted for; 353 were steam trawlers, and 381 were small coasters. Not one of these vessels was of material service,

whether to German trade or to German strategy. A few might creep to and fro between Kiel or Dantzig and Sweden. Otherwise, the ships had, for practical purposes, ceased to exist. When the British Prize Court opened, 225 German ships, with a tonnage of 550,000 tons, were lying helpless in British ports.

Among naval writers it had been the custom to extol sea power as a decisive arbiter over the fate of Empires. The first five months of the war went far to justify this view. It was sea power that terminated the German occupation of Kiao-Chou, and handed over her Polynesian islands to Australia. It was sea power that planted the British at Basrah, on the Persian Gulf, and so captured from Turkey what Germany had planned as the terminus of her Mesopotamian railway. It was sea power that destroyed the military stores at Akaba, and so frustrated a Germano-Turkish advance on Egypt by way of the Sinaitic Peninsula. It was sea power that evicted a score of German merchantmen from the security of the Suez Canal and transformed that waterway into a bulwark against the invasion of Egypt by a Turkish army advancing along the Levantine coast. When the Khedive Abbas threw in his lot with the Ottoman Sultan and appeared in support of Goltz Pasha, who had finished with Louvain and was now back in Constantinople, it was sea power that annexed Cyprus and declared a protectorate over Egypt, with Hussein, the Khedive's uncle, as Sultan. The Territorial Regiments which lined the streets of

Cairo were convoyed by sea power. The Australian contingents which joined them were similarly convoyed. If there was a British Army in France, if that Army was reinforced by Indians and Canadians, if the French themselves were assisted by Algerians, it was all due to the naval alliance. On the other hand, it was estimated that 200,000 German reservists were prevented from rejoining the colours by the same impalpable influence. In Buenos Ayres alone there were said to be 30,000 isolated subjects of the Kaiser. This meant that sea power, while adding constantly to the Allied forces in France, deprived Germany of three or four reserve Army Corps.

Not less serious was the effect of sea power on supplies. It meant that the Allied States could not only freely assist one another, but also draw on the rest of the world for whatever they wanted. If Spain or the United States were ready to part with rifles, these much-needed weapons would go not to Germany, but to Germany's foes. If Russia asked for "butter and eggs," whatever butter and eggs might be, there was the route open to Archangel. If Servia had shot away her last round of ammunition, and Austria were advancing in triumph to Belgrade, it might happen most unexpectedly that the little nation would round on the aggressor and reveal an equipment for which that aggressor was totally unprepared. Germany on her side was conscious that, however great might be her accumulations, they could not be thus replenished, and that in the end they

must be exhausted. During 1914 no actual shortage was disclosed. But there was anxiety in the Fatherland over rubber, which, with the adoption of motor transport, had become a prime necessity of war. The warehouses of Antwerp, when captured, were found to be empty, and a synthetic substitute for the real thing was discussed. Copper, too, was becoming scarce. Whether pots and pans made of this metal were really collected from the Belgians, and whether tramways were ripped up for the sake of the copper there contained, are questions not easy to answer; but one of the first acts of Turkey, when at war under German command, was to seize the copper mines at Batoum. In November 1913 the imports from the United States into Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Italy totalled 11 million lb. In November 1914 the total was 50 million lb., this despite a vigilance by Great Britain which drew from President Wilson a somewhat technical protest.

There is a common notion that naval warfare is on the whole more merciful than war on land. When fleet meets fleet there is no danger of destroying villages or killing non-combatant women and children. The number of men engaged in this warfare is small. When 19 millions of soldiers were under arms in Europe, it is safe to say that all the navies engaged were manned by not more than half a million men. In the first four months of war the British casualties on land, including killed, wounded, and missing, were

approaching 100,000, or the total number of troops which fought the original battle of Mons. The naval casualties were, not reckoning Antwerp, just over 4000, though of these the missing were only six, and seven out of eight of the rest were killed outright. A navy is thus more expensive in money and less expensive in men than an army. At 10s. a day a battalion of one thousand strong costs £180,000 to maintain at the front. But a super-Dreadnought, with a crew of a thousand, represents, to begin with, an initial expenditure of between 2 and 3 millions, and, in maintenance, it is several times as costly as its military equivalent.

Still, if we are to strike a balance, we must not underestimate the cruelty of naval warfare. At The Hague Conference of 1907, Great Britain refused to exempt enemy commerce from capture at sea. Pacifists argued with some plausibility that this refusal justified Germany in her persistent construction of a navy. Sir Edward Grey did not deny that in retaining the right of capture, as he did, and with it the right of blockade, he wished to be able, if necessity arose, to force Germany to her knees by economic pressure. The contention then was that a Hague Convention which expressly denounced the capture of private property on land, should have included a similar provision for the sea; and all that Sir Edward Grey could at that time answer was that even if Great Britain had given way on private capture, Germany would still have continued her ship-

building programme. If, however, we do not here pursue the discussion of this matter, it is because, like the Declaration of London, and every other proposed rule of war, it has been rendered academic by the conduct of Germany herself. Whatever was signed or left unsigned at The Hague Convention, Germany, whether on land or sea, went her own way, wrecking, burning, killing, without inquiring into age or sex, or the character of the property thus destroyed. If Great Britain had signed away the right to capture private property, public opinion would have expected her to keep her word. But Germany—we regret to have to say it—would have torn up that scrap of paper, like many another.

According to The Hague Convention “it is forbidden to lay unanchored automatic, contact mines unless they be so constructed as to become harmless one hour at most after the person who laid them has ceased to control them.” Such mines must become harmless when they have broken loose from their moorings; and the same rule applies to torpedoes which have missed their mark. Germany accepted this general article, but reserved her assent to the more specific prohibition :

“The laying of automatic contact mines off the coast and ports of the enemy with the sole object of intercepting commercial shipping, is forbidden.”

The war had not been in progress forty-eight hours before a German mine-layer, *Koenigin*

*Luise*, was discovered off Harwich and sunk by a British destroyer, the *Lance*. Four shots were sufficient for this purpose, and in six minutes the offending vessel foundered. There was a grim sequel. The survivors of the *Koenigin Luise*, rescued by the humane efforts of British seamen, were placed on board the light cruiser, *Amphion*. Many of the prisoners were wounded, and they were confined in the forecastle. The *Amphion* was still reconnoitring for mines laid by the German vessel when she was struck in the bows, and sunk. Not only did 150 of the crew perish, but 20 of the prisoners were immediately killed by the explosion which they themselves had prepared.

This retribution illustrated the blindness of the new warfare. A mine, once out of control, is a peril to friend, foe, and neutral. Danish merchantmen and Dutch trawlers equally suffered. Germany did not hesitate to send forth her mine-layers disguised under neutral flags. One at least of them thus penetrated into St. George's Channel and threatened the main trade route from Liverpool. The rejoinder of the Admiralty was speedy and uncompromising. The entire North Sea, with the exception of certain well-defined channels, was declared to be a military area, closed to peaceful shipping.

The second of Germany's offences against the rules of war happily stands alone. She had devastated Belgium. Thousands of her homeless victims sought refuge on British soil. By deliberate act, a



Katherine Collings  
73 Park St. W.  
1875

K. Collings

H.M. KING ALBERT

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German submarine torpedoed a passenger steamer which was crowded with these unfortunate people. Pieces of the torpedo were discovered and identified, and if hundreds of women and children escaped a horrible death it was due to the efforts of the British Navy.

The third and most serious of Germany's outrages was perpetrated also in defiance of the express rules of The Hague, to which she was party. "The bombardment," says that Convention, "by naval forces of undefended ports, towns, villages, dwellings, or buildings is forbidden." Twice did the German Navy bombard Libau, for what military reason it is impossible to conceive. Bona, in Algeria, was also bombarded, with, conceivably, some justification, if as a railway terminus it was held to be a convenient seaport for dispatching troops. But the worst case of all occurred on the east coast of England. Hartlepool is guarded by forts, and is thus, in a technical sense, defended. The forts were attacked, and they replied. But Scarborough and Whitby have no importance except as seaside resorts. On the 16th of December a small squadron of powerful German cruisers hurled scores of shells at these places, killing 110 persons and wounding 435 others, of whom a number afterwards died. On this disgraceful incident we make only one remark. It disposes of any suggestion that, in 1907 or at any other time, it would have been possible for Sir Edward Grey to arrive at an effective arrangement with Germany for the mitigation of naval warfare. The

Russian Government decided that, in such cases, the officers ordering the attack on civilians should be tried and condemned, if captured, as common outlaws.

The action of the British Navy had thrown Germany into a paroxysm of hatred. Her pride was deeply wounded by loss of colonies. Her pocket was impoverished by a virtual cessation of foreign trade. And her larder was affected. Germany and Austria-Hungary, working together, could undoubtedly produce enough of simple foods to keep body and soul alive. But this home production depended upon a careful ingathering of the harvest and an accurate distribution of the grain in those industrial regions where it was required. The tillers of the soil, like other workers, were in many cases called to the colours, and it is not certain that the women, the boys, and the prisoners who worked on the land were effective substitutes. There was a serious attempt to regulate prices, but it was not entirely successful. The persons who had corn to sell naturally selected those districts where the scale ran highest, and there was a tendency to hold back stocks in the belief that in due course all the scales alike would be revised upwards. The people were told to mix potato with their bread, and to be sparing of both. And the blame was laid on England. If food was commandeered in Belgium or in France, once more the blame was laid on England. If unemployment rose to 10, 15, 20 per cent., and grants for relief had to be made, then again, England who

cut off raw materials for import and manufactured articles for export—England was the enemy. To this day, the Berlin Decrees whereby Napoleon sought to shut out British products from the entire Continent of Europe are an ill memory in our land. What the Berlin Decrees were to the England of Pitt's day, that the closing of the North Sea was to the Germany of our day.

And not only to Germany. Holland, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden were ground, as it were, between the upper and nether millstone. They did not deny that Great Britain had the right, by the usages of war, to prevent contraband from reaching their shores *en route* for Germany. But they contended that if an import like coal suddenly doubled in volume, it might be because the neutral country was itself cut off from German supplies. Public opinion in these hardly used lands swayed and swayed again, as grievances accumulated. When Germany strewed the North Sea with unanchored mines, they followed Great Britain. But when Great Britain closed the North Sea, they were less sympathetic. If England put Swedish ore on the list of contraband, Sweden protested. But when Germany, anxious to hinder the building of soldiers' huts, placed a similar ban on timber, Sweden's protest turned the other way. In December the three Scandinavian Kings met for a conference. It was a meeting of which the British Government thoroughly approved. But it did not result in any immediate declaration of policy. Not many months before the war, all parties in

Sweden had been stirred by dread of Russia, and it was decided to reorganise the Army. Sweden was in no mood to take Russia's side against Germany. But Denmark, still resentful over Schleswig-Holstein, where scores of Danish sympathisers were held as hostages, was even less likely to fight for Germany against Russia and England. The Scandinavian League was thus a strictly neutral bond for the protection of those interests which amid such chaos could be protected

## CHAPTER XIII

### BUSINESS AS USUAL

THE newspapers usually relegated the finance of the war to a back page. The most trivial incident in the trenches made better copy than the closing of a bourse or the default of a South American Republic. If life is more than meat, and if the body is more than raiment, we need not be surprised if the shedding of blood thrilled mankind as mankind has never been thrilled by the chink of coin. Yet, as Mr. Lloyd George was quick to point out, the silver bullet was perhaps the deadliest of all the various missiles employed by the belligerent nations. However zealously the Generals and Admirals might plan out campaigns, with whatever heroism the soldiers and sailors threw themselves into the battles assigned to them, the forces which were slowly and silently determining this great issue were the forces which Generals and Admirals despise—the quiet trend of commerce, the influence of credit—in a word, trade. Amid all the clatter of arms, the things of peace still counted.

When, in August, the great crash came, it

seemed for the moment as if in the financial arena Germany had won a victory. Great Britain had to join in the moratorium which, in one form or another, spread over the entire world except the United States, India, and, strange to say, Germany. If Germany escaped from the general panic, it was due to the fact that in financial as in military matters she was at that date imbued with an unshakeable confidence in her Government and her destiny. The whole of her press, save the *Vorwärts*, which was periodically confiscated, preached optimism. Her people were cut off absolutely from public opinion outside her frontiers. They were convinced that, in a few weeks, the Fatherland would win, and that the other side would foot the bill. It was doubtless unfortunate that in the meantime trade should be interrupted. But this interruption did not seriously affect the financial houses. Berlin and Frankfort were not, like London, the money markets of the world. Finance, as they practised it, was in the main a strictly national endeavour to assist Germany's rapidly increasing industries. What the German banker had to do was to settle with the German manufacturer—doubtless a formidable task, but a task not to be compared with that which confronted London. Under a wave of patriotic fervour, it was not difficult for brother Germans to support their common credit. It was a far more arduous matter for London to maintain her credit, not among Londoners only, but among New Yorkers

and South Americans. To the world as a whole, the issue of the conflict was doubtful. What helped Germany was her certain confidence that only Germany could triumph. This point settled, finance was much simplified.

Broadly, the crisis resolved itself into two difficulties. First, people could not collect their debts, and were thus unable to pay them. Secondly, the value of all property fell. The reason of this fall was that a market in stocks or any other commodity depends on a fair balance between buying and selling. With the outbreak of war, whatever happened to the selling, it is certain that the buyers disappeared. People knew that the value of securities—all alike—would decline heavily as the result of vast borrowings. To purchase even gilt-edged stock at a time when prices were bound to fall would have been folly. Many businesses expected to pass or “to hoard” their dividends. In other cases, dividends, earned in a distant country, might be impossible to transmit. No one could be quite sure whether his neighbour was still solvent, and it was not a question to which, if put, a full answer would always be given. We need not wonder if the price of securities collapsed until there was none that could be quoted. Before a shot had been fired, the market value of 387 representative stocks and shares in the London Exchange fell from 3370 millions sterling to 3182 millions sterling, that is by 188 millions—this in the last ten days of July. On these securities alone the

cost of the war, *before it broke out*, was 20 millions for every working day.

The financiers and capitalists of Germany enjoyed the initial advantage of knowing in advance that their Government intended to have war. The rest of the world still dared to reckon on peace. Germany got herself into condition by unloading as many securities as she could on to the London and other markets. She bought largely of food and other supplies. If a balance be struck, it may be assumed that many of her interests were indebted to other nations for services rendered and goods received. A debtor is not always inconvenienced if, owing to a sudden accident, the man who has lent him money is removed to a safe distance. The very fact that British merchants were hit so heavily by the suspension of German accounts implied that German merchants were enjoying a respite. Moreover, if, as we have suggested, German capital was largely absorbed by German industries, the falling prices of securities would be of less importance to her than to a great financing community like the city of London, or to a thrifty and investing nation like France.

It happened, too, that the system of banking in Germany was peculiarly suited to this great emergency. It is, as we have seen, German and national, rather than cosmopolitan. Instead of floating loans for new communities — we write in general terms — the German banker finances factories in Westphalia and mines in

Silesia. To a good German he allows an almost reckless degree of credit. Where the French quarter in Strassburg remains picturesque and conservative, the German quarter of the town is modern, massive, and outwardly prosperous. What the Frenchman puts into his stocking, the German puts into stone and mortar, and, be it added, into the education of numerous children. The German banker was thus well accustomed to taking industrial risks. In August he met the situation by lending unlimited sums on the most miscellaneous securities. In the furnishing of credit, the Government rendered assistance. Special lending banks were opened. They issued notes against stocks and shares, against buildings and lands, against goods. It was not even necessary to deposit the goods. They could remain in the warehouse, with a stamp and seal from the State. Anyone who had anything to pawn, be it only worth a few shillings, could obtain a loan at  $6\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. The loan was, however, granted not in coin, either gold or silver, but in paper, and any shop refusing to honour that paper as if it equalled coin was closed by the police. Thus it was that Germany avoided a moratorium. Since everybody could obtain credit, everybody could pay his way.

It was thus, too, that Germany floated her first loan of about £230,000,000, the instalments of which were paid without the slightest hitch. The man who owned his house could mortgage it for Government notes. He took the notes to

his banker and exchanged them for loan stock or bonds. Having obtained these securities, he could again deposit them with his banker and borrow on them a further batch of notes. He and his Government were in like case. They both borrowed and both received the loan as paper. But, of course, the investor had the worst of the bargain. What he paid to the State was  $6\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. What he received from the State was about 5 per cent. less depreciation. The difference was represented by patriotism, and how that patriotism was fanned into a flame is illustrated by the following passage from an official manifesto :

“ We stand against a world in arms. No financial assistance worth mentioning is to be expected from neutral countries, and we are thrown on our own resources for procuring money. German corporations, establishments, savings banks, institutes, companies which have blossomed and grown up under the powerful protection of the Empire ! Repay the Empire with your gratitude in this fateful hour ! Let no one say that he has no liquid assets.”

So long as Germany and Germans were dealing only with one another, the creation of unlimited paper was a convenient domestic arrangement. But as payment for supplies imported from abroad, the paper was useless. What Germany there needed was gold. As months passed she made excited appeals to her people to exchange any coin that they had hoarded for notes. Every bank, post office, and railway station was a gathering

ground for precious metal. One Catholic newspaper published lists of gold collected, as if the people had been subscribers to a Red Cross fund, e.g. this item, "The P. Parish (after instruction from the pulpit), £1000." If photographs are to be believed, men and women by the thousand sacrificed their very wedding rings to the State, receiving iron circlets in their place. The gold reserve at Spandau had been left at 6 millions sterling. In 1913 a law had been passed to double this sum and add a further 6 millions of silver. But in the Reichsbank there was by Christmas a gold reserve of not less than 100 millions sterling, a rise of 38 millions during the war. Yet the reserve, though substantial, could not be replenished save from Germany herself. In South Africa the production of gold continued normal, and all over the world gold was to be bought by those who paid the price. But the price must be something more solid than paper. Germany could not easily export goods, and it followed that except in so far as she realised investments—also a difficult matter—she could not import bullion. In Great Britain, as we shall see, there were both import and export, and, as a result, the gold crisis ended in a week.

There was thus a good reason why the British Government laboured so vigilantly to prevent trading with the enemy. The London branches of the Deutsche and Dresdner Banks and of all similar concerns were placed in the hands of receivers who completed business which was already in hand, but

rejected new business, and in any case held up monies which in the ordinary course would have been transmitted to Germany. A condition to be observed within the reopened Stock Exchange was that under no circumstances was any operation to be sanctioned, except on the understanding that no alien enemy was concerned in it. Legislation was carried which prevented alien firms trading under new names registered on the limited liability lists at Somerset House, and all persons acting as agents for Germans or Austrians must disclose the fact. For enemy property in this country a custodian was appointed to whom debts could be paid, who also would, if he had funds in the name of an enemy firm, liquidate proved liabilities of that firm in this country. But, during the war, no money was to be sent to Germany, and it was hinted that the ultimate payment of receipts held in trust by the custodian would depend upon Germany herself guaranteeing that her people would, at the end of the war, pay their private debts to persons in this country.

Some of the measures appeared to cancel one another. For instance, the export of tea was prohibited although nobody could allege that soldiers, least of all Prussian soldiers, depended for victory on tea. The best thing that could have happened for the Allies would have been that Germany's available gold should have been invested in tea. Indeed, the case is proved by the fact that Great Britain, while so dealing with tea, also prohibited the export from Germany of sugar.

The argument here was that by this export Germany would turn her crop into gold and her gold into gunpowder. If that contention be accurate, then there would have been no harm in Germany turning British tea into gold which Britain could turn into gunpowder. The confusion of thought was still further complicated by the fact that at the very moment when Great Britain was excluding German sugar lest Germany should be assisted, Germany herself was inclined to prevent the export of that sugar, lest Britain should be assisted. Doubtless it was not a time for clear fiscal thinking.

Sugar was the one article of food, except perhaps fish, of which there was a real scarcity during the autumn months. The German crop was necessary to Great Britain, and without it prices rose to 4½d. a lb. In order to assure the position, the Government quietly bought up sugar to the value of £18,000,000, and it was this preparatory measure which rendered it possible definitely to exclude the German product. Whether the prices paid were too high is another matter. So vast a cornering operation tended obviously to inflate them. Mixed up with the general propaganda which was directed to capturing German trade, there was some talk of beet growing in this country. All that can be said here is that during 1914 the schemes did not seriously affect the situation. We should, however, mention two classes of goods "made in Germany" the shortage of which was severely felt. Doll-making is a village in-

dustry in the Fatherland, and, like the rest of the toys exported therefrom, the dolls are amazingly cheap. Some attempt was made to supply English playthings, and very ingenious many of them were. But it will not be denied by those who collected great quantities of Christmas gifts for the poor that their choice was much restricted. Again, in Yorkshire the woollen mills were suddenly confronted by a lack of those chemical dyes for which the trade had depended absolutely on Germany. So impressed was the Government by this case that a sum of £1,500,000 was set aside for the purchase of debentures in a dye-trust, to be financed co-operatively by the manufacturers concerned. Time alone would show how far the trust would survive the German competition which doubtless would arise when the war came to an end. The inauguration of the enterprise was attended with great difficulty.

It was obvious from the first that the German method of financing the war, like the war itself, was a stupendous gamble. If Germany received a large indemnity in gold, she would be able to withdraw much of her paper and maintain the rest at a gold standard. But suppose that she failed to win her indemnity, or that the war exceeded in cost any indemnity that she could exact, or, still worse, that, after a long and costly war she had herself to find an indemnity, what then would be her position? Her paper money would fall inevitably to a heavy discount. Indeed, as early as Christmas 1914 the discount was fully 10 per

cent. although the currency was backed by 47 per cent. of gold. Every housewife would discover that the purchasing capacity of the mark was reduced, possibly to one-half of what it had been. While wages remained at the same nominal figure, want would be doubled. Foreign exchange would be dislocated. There would come a moment inevitably when Germany would learn that in arithmetic, at anyrate, there is no special rule, no divine immunity for the Fatherland.

In the United Kingdom the August panic was, as we have seen, overwhelming. For generations the whole world had relied on London as a place where good paper, whatever the amount, could be changed at once into good gold. This reputation survived the Napoleonic Wars, the Overend and Gurney failure, the Baring collapse, and the American crisis of 1907. It will always be an open question whether the banks might not have pulled London through the difficulties of 1914. In one week the gold reserve of the Bank of England fell from  $38\frac{1}{2}$  millions to 26 millions. But in the cellars of the other banks there was several times this sum in gold, and the refusal to discount bills was a staggering blow at the hitherto inviolable prestige of London paper.

In every previous case the suspension of the Bank Act had effectively restored confidence. In this case also the Bank Act was suspended, but the measure was insufficient. The Bank Act forbids the Bank to issue notes beyond a certain fixed excess over the gold reserve. The suspension

of the Act authorised the Bank to issue notes to an unlimited amount and to withhold gold. But this authorisation was useless if the machinery for printing the notes in large numbers did not exist. It is a strange yet certain fact that in those critical August days the financial credit of the Empire was affected by the capacity of a printing machine. It was not that people wanted gold as against notes. What they wanted was currency. The difficulty as to gold ended at once when it was known that the Treasury was printing sovereign and ten shilling notes on postal-order paper. So urgent was the need for these notes that postal orders themselves were declared to be legal tender, this despite the poundage on their sale, while Bankers received the notes damp from the printers, and sometimes so hastily struck off that they had to be returned. The Bank rate, which had risen to 10 per cent., was reduced to 6 per cent. and then to 5 per cent. At that moderate figure, whatever gold had been hoarded began to flow back into the Bank's coffers, and in December the reserve had risen to more than 70 millions. London was, once more, the one financial centre where all obligations could be met at once in the standard metal. And the new currency did not greatly exceed 30 millions.

Since the banks withheld credit, there had to be a moratorium. By the first proclamation it was confined to Bills of Exchange which matured between 4th August and 4th September. Payment of these bills could be postponed for one

month if interest on the debt were promised at Bank rate. It was quickly made clear to the Government that a restricted moratorium like this would actually create hardships while failing to mitigate those from which many commercial houses were suffering. A general moratorium was therefore proclaimed. It applied only to debts incurred before the war, and to no debt under £5. It also applied to rent. It was, clearly, a great safeguard for the banks. No deposit or balance standing to the credit of a customer when war broke out could be withdrawn save by the bank's consent. The banks agreed that they would not allow new, or post-moratorium, accounts to be opened to which the restriction would not apply. This meant that the customer could not touch his own working capital if his banker objected, and many banks did object. It is thus little wonder if when eight thousand letters of inquiry were addressed to prominent men of business, more than half raised strong protests against a continuance of the moratorium. On the 4th of December it was allowed peacefully to lapse. Certain special measures remained still in force, but the trade and credit of the nation were restored.

What were these special measures? When explaining them to the House of Commons, Mr. Lloyd George aroused a sympathetic cheer by the remark that few people can define a bill of exchange. We hazard the suggestion that it may be regarded popularly as a post-dated cheque.

A man in Liverpool buys cotton at St. Louis. It will take him two months to receive that cotton and sell it. He gives to the seller, or to the agent of the seller, a piece of paper promising to pay at the end of two months. That—if we avoid technicalities—is the essence of the transaction, and in August 1914 the aggregate of such paper in England was 350 millions sterling, or half the national debt. The bills pass from hand to hand, exactly as if they were bank notes, except that as the date of redemption draws near the value of the bill gradually rises to the sum entered on the face of it. The outbreak of war meant that the whole of these bills became suspect. The cotton seller in St. Louis dared not consign a cargo on such security. The grain merchant of Chicago was in like case. The entire machinery of transport was brought to a standstill. In fact, the case was worse. A bank with money to its credit in New York,—a bank which wanted that money for use in England,—could not conveniently get it. Under ordinary circumstances the agent of the bank in New York would buy bills. The money for the bills would be collected in England. But if bills ceased to be negotiable, the operation was impossible and the only alternative was a shipment of gold, with all the loss there involved. To show how small was Britain's dependence on gold as a medium of exchange, we have only to mention that in 1913, a year of booming trade, when exports and imports reached the colossal figure of about 1200 millions sterling, London

only received 50 millions in gold and only paid away 45 millions.

The Government took the bold course of asking the Bank of England to discount any outstanding bills accepted before the war which might be presented. The Bank rate was 5 per cent. The special rate charged for these bills was 7 per cent. The Government received  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. as insurance fund ; the Bank received 4 per cent. as interest and  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. was allocated for working expenses. Of the bills thus on the market, the total of those discounted under the guarantee was 120 millions. At least double this total were liquidated in the usual way, without any assistance from the State. Of the 120 millions, it is estimated that 50 millions will remain in what Mr. Lloyd George called "cold storage" until the end of the war. Many of these are Russian bills, others are German ; but the ultimate loss is estimated at not more than one week's cost of the fighting, or, let us say, 15 millions.

This drastic acceptance of liability by the State did not end the matter. It meant that an immense sum paid for the bills was added to bank deposits instead of circulating freely in the bill market. In other words, the clearance of outstanding bills did not enable merchants to draw, accept, and discount new bills by which alone commerce could continue. The Government, therefore, persuaded the Bank to resume the discounting of bills under a provisional guarantee that they would, if need be, receive the support of the State. That guarantee

restored the bill market to something like normal working.

The Stock Exchange remained closed. However inclement the weather, members gathered in the street or, as they called it, "the trench," and so transacted what little business was to be done. A minimum price list of securities was issued which some critics considered to be fictitious. The satisfactory settlement at the end of July showed that the Stock Exchange was then solvent; this despite the heavy fall in prices which had already taken place. The difficulty now was that members were in debt to their bankers and to well-recognised finance houses. Against these obligations, securities had been deposited which at July prices showed a margin of 5 or 10 per cent. The slump in securities had reduced the margin to nil or to a minus quantity, and the banks would be compelled either to ask for a reduction of the debt or to require more margin, that is, a deposit of additional securities. The Stock Exchange could find neither the money nor the paper. If any considerable number of firms had been hammered, their assets would have been put up at once for sale and the market would have been still more gravely disorganised. In particular, it would have been difficult to collect death duties. The Treasury insisted that estates should be valued as at the date of the decease, which in practice meant at the prices of the 30th of July. This was, considering the fall in prices, something of a hardship; but the difficulty would be intensified if the Stock Exchange, when meeting after a lapse

of six months, had to clear up arrears of realisation while it was itself in chaos.

The loans that had to be dealt with amounted to 81 millions in London and 11 millions in the country, or 92 millions in all. Adequate cover was provided for 77 millions, and about 15 millions was not so sustained. The Government again stepped in. The arrangement was broadly that the banks should continue the loans at a special rate of interest and under a provisional guarantee. The finance houses, which were in hardly so strong a position, were allowed a liberal measure of accommodation from the Bank of England. The Stock Exchange was thus assured of its loans, but under conditions which made it well worth while to clear them off.

It is fair to this abused institution to state that the business which it was conducting when the crash came was of a sound character. There was but little speculation, and the various settlements which occurred in November passed off easily enough. But the cessation of business told heavily on the members themselves. Their incomes ceased, yet many of their expenses continued. The date for reopening was no longer to be decided by them. Mr. Lloyd George insisted that, as makeweight for the Government guarantee, the Treasury should determine the future policy of the Stock Exchange. The doors were to be unlocked on the 4th of January, and the business authorised was to be for cash. For an important list of securities there were to be no dealings at prices below those

scheduled, and no alien enemy was to be admitted. The date, the 4th of January, was convenient, because no price quoted on that day would affect the valuation of securities on which banks and other institutions must base their balance sheets. By this comment we do not mean to imply that British bankers had in past years failed to write off the depreciation of their assets. Huge sums had been appropriated for this wholesome purpose, and with most steady results. All that we record is that nothing was left to chance.

In various other directions the strong hand of the State assisted special classes in their special needs. The railways, though managed as formerly, had been taken over by the War Office and used largely for military purposes. Payment was made by the simple plan of guaranteeing that dividends should continue as before. There were many firms to which money was owed from abroad without the formality of a bill of exchange. In respect of such debts they were allowed a certain limited accommodation from their bankers. The County Courts and Courts of Bankruptcy were empowered to use a discretion by which they could hold over proceedings against debtors, whether for rent or other obligations. Provision was made against the harsh lapsing of industrial insurance policies of under £20 face value. Last but not least, a guarantee was arranged with the banks for the Liverpool Cotton Exchange. The difficulty there was similar to the difficulty on the London Stock Exchange. Money had been borrowed against

cargoes of cotton, and the cotton had fallen as much as 30 per cent. in price. To sell it thus meant insolvency for the broker, and what the Government secured for him was time.

These various interferences with trade and finance were unprecedented. They were the devices suggested to and sifted by one of the most daring financiers, indeed, we may say, quite the most daring financier who has ever presided over the Exchequer. Mr. Lloyd George possessed the valuable quality of detecting sound judgment in others. He trusted the right advisers and gripped the essential points. By co-operating with Mr. Austen Chamberlain he escaped party criticism; and of the Conservative Party it is bare justice to add that they refrained from controversy, even with one whom they regarded as their most unsparing political foe. So enthusiastic were the bankers in their praise of the Chancellor of the Exchequer that one of them, a director of Llyods, recommended to his shareholders that a dukedom should be conferred on the benefactor who had doubled the super-tax.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE SILVER BULLET

IN the month of November the battle of finance between Great Britain and Germany began in all seriousness. On the outbreak of war, Mr. Asquith applied for and was granted a credit of 100 millions. In one afternoon the House of Commons swept away the whole fruits of ten years of unexampled repayment of debt. For the moment the 100 millions was raised by means of Treasury bills, redeemable for the most part in six months, but, of course, renewable, if the plan were thought convenient. The average rate of interest on these bills was roughly £3, 12s. per cent. ; but several issues were placed at an even less expensive figure. There was in the banks an abundance of loose money. Had there been no war, the first slackening of trade would have released for investment the accumulated profits of the long boom. The war quickly reduced the volume of commerce and filled the banks with unemployed capital, which was the logical counterpart of unemployed labour. Treasury bills, certain to be repaid shortly at par, were admirably suited

to this kind of deposit. They were heavily over-subscribed.

When Parliament met in November, Mr. Asquith received a further credit of 250 millions, making 350 in all, or a prospective addition of approximately 50 per cent. to the National Debt. It was decided to float a loan, and by a bold stroke the amount of the loan was fixed at the whole 350 millions. It was agreed that the interest on this loan would have to be as high as 4 per cent., but the nominal interest was only  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. The price of issue was 95, and the stock was redeemable at par in ten to thirteen years, the appreciation adding  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. to the return upon it. This meant that the Treasury actually received 330 millions in cash, which was sufficient to take up the 100 millions of bills when they fell due, with 230 to spare. The method of issue was a financial revolution. The stock was advertised in the Press. Outside the Bank of England a booth was erected at which application could be made. Although the Stock Exchange was closed, this unparalleled demand on the investing public was met in full, though the margin, understood to be small, was not stated.

To begin with, the Banks and Finance houses took up 100 millions firm. In the next place, payment could be made by instalments. But the greatest innovation was that, for the first time, a British Government stock was frankly offered in bonds, without vexatious restrictions. The practice of inscribing Consols at the Bank of England was doubtless convenient enough for

large financiers. But to the man of small means, with a hundred or two laid by, it was sheer mystery. He could understand a piece of paper with coupons attached. But to pay over his money in order that his name might be inscribed in a book at the Bank of England, at the instance of some broker with a power of attorney, was a much more cumbrous and suspicious affair. The new arrangement involved a far deeper principle than the merely technical aspect of it would lead us to imagine. It meant that the war could not be financed by the few. In England as in Germany, the whole nation must be harnessed for the struggle, and even the National Debt must be in a measure democratised.

The loan involved much more than this. It put an end for ever to the practice of borrowing by the State without the fixing of a date for redemption. Consols are merely a perpetual annuity. The nation accepts no real responsibility for the capital. Its value may rise to 112; it may sink to 68; but the Treasury goes on its way unconcerned. Indeed, the greater the depreciation of Consols the better pleased is the Exchequer mind; for with Consols cheap, repayment of debt is accelerated. But it is not certain that this point of view is entirely worthy of British credit. The reduction in interest on Consols from 3 per cent. to 2½ per cent. was a sharp piece of work, the results of which amount very nearly to a default upon the debt. It is a simple fact of arithmetic, that the man who held on to the

premier security, as it was called, from Goschen days onwards lost by depreciation nearly double—what, for the moment, a man lost who put his money into the last Brazilian loan, on which interest was funded. No such system could survive a war like this. If the State wanted money, the State must, for the future, undertake, like a private individual or a municipality, to repay it in due course.

The loan was safeguarded by a peculiar provision that the Bank of England would for three years advance loans on it up to the price of issue. By this means the investor was protected against his stock falling to a discount, since at any time he could take it and borrow on it what he had paid for it. But, of course, he would have to find the interest on his loan, and the interest would be reckoned at bank rate. Thus while he only received 3½ per cent. on his stock, he would pay 5 per cent. for his accommodation. While, then, there was a useful provision against a slump, it was an expensive luxury. What happened to the loan was precisely what might have been anticipated. Its price fell to a very slight discount, not enough to justify borrowing from the Bank, but sufficient to indicate what may be called difficulties of digestion.

One danger of the flotation attracted some notice. For years the deposits in the Savings Banks, with accrued interest, had been accumulating, until the amount to the credit of depositors stood at 230 millions, or one-third the National

Debt. These funds were invested in British securities, and if the deposits had been withdrawn one of three measures must have been adopted. Either the Savings Banks must have suspended payment, or that payment must have been made in the new paper currency, or the British securities must have been sold at an enormous sacrifice for gold. No run on the Savings Banks occurred or was contemplated ; but consider what might have been the situation if the Treasury had issued bonds of as low a denomination as £10 or £20, to carry interest at  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. The depositor in the Post Office would say to himself, " I only receive  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. for my money. I will withdraw it, buy a bond, and make sure of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent." The State would have gained not one penny in working capital. But a new charge of 1 per cent. would have been created.

The lowest denomination of bond was, therefore, £100, which was well above the average deposit in the Savings Bank. It will always be arguable that it would have been better to make the loan an issue at par, carrying interest at 4 per cent., rather than an issue at 95, with  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. interest. The advantages claimed for the plan adopted were two. First, the stock was bound as years passed to appreciate in value, which made it a most suitable security for insurance societies and banks ; while, secondly, it could not rise to a premium, and so become unsuitable for trustees. The issue was not greatly over-subscribed. Most people only asked for

what they could hold, and without a Stock Exchange there could be no speculation. But the wonder is that the money was got so easily. In this opening encounter, Great Britain received her silver bullets at 4 per cent. while Germany paid 5 per cent., and the British loan, not reckoning the bills, was 100 millions larger than its rival.

Great Britain was a rich country. Her foreign investments alone were valued at 4000 millions. Her property at home was worth 18,000 millions. Her income was 2300 millions a year, or, in round numbers, £1 a week, on the average, for every man, woman, and child in the country. Doubtless this income was ill distributed. About half of it went to the million homes which paid income tax, and a mere fraction of the people when dying left estates that were worth the attention of the Inland Revenue. But it was clear that even in bad times Great Britain saved money. Her annual investments were not less than 300 millions, and assuming for the moment that Great Britain's income was maintained, and that she devoted to the war what previously she had spent upon railways in the Argentine and other peaceful enterprises, it is evident that at least 6 millions a week would have been available for the loan purposes, without any entrenchment on reserves. The war cost Britain almost double that sum, but we must for the moment confine ourselves to the observation that its first effect was not so much to drive Britain into debt as to arrest the development of those new countries

which depended on Britain for capital. During the period under review, arrangements were begun for introducing the United States as the chief financier of South America.

The proceeds of the loan were devoted to military and naval operations, to various guarantees of finance and commerce, as already described, to relief operations, and to the finance of other countries. A sum of £10,000,000, without interest, was lent to Belgium. The loan requirements of the Dominions were met by the Treasury, where otherwise they would have had to take their chance in a disorganised market. But at least it could be said that in Great Britain there was no need to borrow to make up deficiencies of revenue. The ordinary Budget of 1914 was framed to raise a sum of 207 millions. But for the war that immense sum would undoubtedly have been forthcoming. After July the receipts certainly fell off, and, according to the forecasts, not more than 195 millions would have been collected by the 31st of March. But of this shortage of 12 millions, about 7 millions would have gone to liquidating debt. The real deficit, in a continental sense of that word, would have been only 5 millions or thereabouts, or, in other words, the nation would have almost met its peace expenditure. Far otherwise was the position abroad. Whatever may be the merits or demerits of a tariff, one thing is certain—it produces nothing along an entrenched frontier. The incomes of continental Governments were in a condition of collapse.

Nor was the reason only that their frontiers were closed. To a far greater extent than was the case in the United Kingdom, the able-bodied population was withdrawn from productive industry.

We have, indeed, understated this matter. The national revenue of Great Britain was not allowed to fall even by so moderate an extent as 12 millions out of 207 millions. At the moment when he was issuing his loan, Mr. Lloyd George imposed new taxation. He put  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. a glass on beer, 2d. a lb. on tea, and he doubled the whole complicated range of levies on incomes. It is true that, in the last case, one quarter only of the addition was to be charged in the current year, but in 1915-16, the next full financial year, a sum of no less than 64 millions would be received from the war taxes. More important, socially, even than this, was the acceptance by the leaders of all three British Parties in the House of Commons of the principle of an income tax for working men, as an alternative to duties on sugar, tea, and so on. Such a tax would have to be collected by means of stamped cards, with which national insurance had made the people familiar ; and clearly so drastic a change could only be brought about by political agreement. The project was another advance towards democracy. A more open diplomacy, a popularised debt and a citizen army were to be accompanied, if possible, by a plain statement to every wage-earner of what his Imperial responsibilities cost him.

Already it was clear that nothing would be

saved in future expenditure by the war on Prussian militarism. Assuming, for the sake of argument, that 700 millions was added to the debt, at an addition for interest of 30 millions, we must reckon 15 millions for repayment, making 45 millions new annual charge on the nation's liabilities. To this sum must be added not less than 15 millions a year for naval and military pensions, making 60 millions. Reckoning for extras, the sum of 64 millions of war revenue for which Mr. Lloyd George budgeted was no more than enough to finance these enormous obligations over the first half dozen years of peace. Optimists hoped that against these charges would be set a considerable reduction in naval and military estimates. But no one could suggest that this reduction would amount to anything like the additions above enumerated. All that could be said was that it is better to spend money on wars which are past, than to spend it on wars which are to come. Slowly but surely the liability for new debt and for pensions would be reduced. It would be like the dead past burying its dead, a bitter and costly experience, but not calculated to promote future alarms.

What surprised people during that November and December was the manifest prosperity of the nation. Despite Old Age Pensions, the National Insurance Acts, and the more tentative endeavours to feed school children, there still remained, obstinately irreducible, a mass of pauperism which, in England and Wales, ran to 630,000 cases

of indoor and outdoor relief. Between summer and winter the figure fluctuated, and it varied with good and bad trade. In August it leapt up by 40,000, owing to a special cause to be mentioned in a moment; but by December, pauperism was normal, and, in London, lower than at the same date in 1913. So also was unemployment. When war broke out there was a sudden rise in the registered trades to over 6 per cent. It was a serious figure, but by no means unprecedented. During November it fell to (approximately) 3 per cent., which for the season was indicative of good trade. Elaborate preparations had been made for accelerating schemes of improvement under the Road Board and Development Commission. But it was not a case of special urgency, and the local authorities were asked by Mr Lloyd George to hold back outlays from loans which were not immediately necessary. Here then was the nation engaged in a war of unparalleled severity, with the Stock Exchange closed, with a long list of Government guarantees in force for various financial and commercial risks, and with a moratorium not yet drawn to a close. Why was pauperism normal and employment apparently so excellent?

The figures above quoted did not reveal the extent of under-employment. A factory which worked half-time was considered to be in a full wage-paying condition. Lancashire, dependent on the cotton trade, was worse hit than any statistics of trade union or Labour Bureau would indicate.

Four-fifths of her trade is export. While the fall in the price of raw material looked like an advantage, it was really a grave embarrassment. Loans and overdrafts had all been arranged on the basis of a steady value for cotton. When that value in part disappeared, the entire fabric of market and manufacture—perhaps the most perfect and most delicate industrial organism in the world—was rent asunder. Men of substance, whose mills employed a town, would say that they knew not whether or not they were solvent. The Army and Navy wanted many things, but cotton goods were the least of them; and a slump which, apart from the war, would have occurred in any case, became alarming in its proportions. Happily there was a recovery. The fact that battles were fought in Galicia and Flanders did not mean that families in India and China would forego interminably that modicum of raiment which Lancashire supplied at so cheap a figure. Germany had ceased for the moment to be a serious competitor. Although the custom of the Balkans ceased, Calcutta came to the rescue. As we have explained, the Liverpool Cotton Exchange was reopened and the bill markets restored, so that even in Lancashire normal conditions were gradually resumed.

Among other hit trades were furniture and jewellery; and along the East Coast the entire fishing industry. Many women were thrown out of work, typists especially; but even here the vast increase in clerical labour at Government offices somewhat relieved the situation in London. The

Army commandeered motor transport. Chauffeurs, therefore, who otherwise would have been out of jobs, were required by thousands, and received excellent wages from a grateful nation. The middle classes, which might have been ground to powder, justified even their existence. The huge enlistment of recruits disclosed at once a corresponding shortage of officers. Young men, trained at public schools, whose fathers were impoverished by the war, received commissions and ceased to be a burden to their parents. There was an unprecedented demand for doctors. The Insurance Act had already endowed a profession which, all told, numbered 30,000, with a vast guaranteed emolument of, say, £5,000,000 a year. The war claimed, not only qualified men, but medical students, for the front. The class of the population which was healthiest needed most attention. The very fact that Oxford, Cambridge, and the London hospitals were empty of students meant that the healing arts lacked even the inadequate flow of new entrants which before the war had threatened a shortage. Positions in hospitals could not be filled. There was, if one may so put it, a sudden famine in the most essential kind of all higher education. The war debt was something more than money. It was a drain on nerve, on life, on limb, on brain.

There is, too, this advantage in voluntary enlistment. Conscription is a hard and fast rule which removes all men alike, whether they be useful or useless to productive industry. The

British system automatically picks out the least employed, and the men with the smallest family responsibilities. We speak not of all cases, but of the general tendency. The Stock Exchange was at a standstill. Thousands of clerks enrolled themselves. Other wars were fought by the farm labourer. In this war, agriculture, less dependent on social pressure than in Napoleon's day, played a less prominent part than the counting-house. Patriotic firms undertook to keep open the positions so vacated ; but one might well ask, in what mood would these young men of the city, who lunched at tea-shops, return after their trench-work ? What restlessness would have infected their blood ? There they were, marching with pickaxes as well as rifles, a great population sent back to the land. Would they ever return to the office stool ?

We can now see why the nation seemed to be doing so well. Its income was 2300 millions. In certain important directions that income was reduced. But, of borrowed money, the State was spending from 7 to 10 millions a week. This meant that little was invested abroad, and that every available penny was disbursed at home on immediate needs. Doubtless the nation was living beyond its income, this by an immense sum, say, 300 millions a year. But, for the moment, the money was being spent very largely on what we may call wages, in the broadest sense of that term. Let us assume that 3,000,000 men were withdrawn from industry, and that in any ordinary way these men would have earned £100 a year. The loss in

wages would be 300 millions and in production a higher sum. But these men, though no longer producers, did not starve. Making every allowance for War Office failings, which, to be fair to that department, were remedied with becoming zeal, these millions were clothed and booted better than many of them, at any rate, could have afforded in time of peace. Their caps, their rifles, their huts, their ammunition—all meant that money was spent on them, far in excess of the peace average. Even when they went to the front, the supplies came from England. The war meant an immense democratisation of expenditure—a reversion back to fundamental trades, of which, alas! one of the earliest is killing. It was as if the said wage-earners had been allowed a holiday on the grouse moors, with guns and costume complete, riding there in motor cars, and then shooting not at grouse, but at their fellow-men.

Indeed, the parallel is incomplete. Britain became the workshop for the Allies as well as herself. Dumfries was oppressed with orders for hosiery. Northampton and other centres made boots by the million. Yorkshire was breathlessly producing khaki. Sheffield and Birmingham laboured in metal. The shipbuilding yards were clattering with new construction. London docks were full of timber, and builders were busy enough putting up huts. The railwaymen and the police, the civil servants and the old age pensioners, all continued to receive and to disburse their regular emoluments over the counter, and the retail trades-

man who dealt in necessaries had little to fear. Pictures and curiosities were unsaleable. But the price of bread and of meat rose, not only because the supply was less, there was another reason. In peace time, families went underfed. But, with the country in danger—the country that included banks and hotels and pleasant villas—the humblest man counted one, and the richest counted no more than one. Human value went to a premium, and with it food, leather, and cloth.

In Pitt's day the recruits had no votes. His Majesty, King George III., addressed them thus :

**WHAT HO ! MY MERRY BUCKS !  
NOW OR NEVER.**

G. R.

Wanted a number of bold, aspiring Yorkshire lads to serve as Gentlemen Soldiers in His Majesty's 85th, or Young Bucks, Regiment of his Infantry ; whose hearts beat high at the sound of the Drum, and who have an inclination above servile employment (etc.).

Lincolnshire men were invited to the Black Swan, Newark, in these terms :

Spirited Lads of Size, Character, and Qualification may acquit themselves of all women labouring with child and young children, and enter into the direct road to Honour and Preferment.

**GOD BLESS THE KING  
(And Damn the Enemy).**

Such methods were not needed in 1914. The nearest approach to them was perhaps a poster attributed to a sporting peer. "Are you a man or a mouse?" ran this production. "Are you a man who will for ever be handed down to posterity as a gallant patriot, or are you to be handed down to posterity as a rotter and coward?" How deeply the recruiting affected the people may be estimated from one or two illustrations. The population of Wroxall, Isle of Wight, was 460. No fewer than 70, or one male in three, served the King. In Altrincham, Cheshire, 81 men went to the colours out of 61 houses in Chapel Street. Hever, in Kent, sent 74 men out of a population of 366. Brotherhood meetings dispatched recruits by the score; one class that could be mentioned enlisted 100 members, or one in three. Every family was concerned, and the most insular of nations was swept by an irresistible tide into the whirlpool of continental antipathies.

While Germany eked out 9 marks a month in summer for a wife whose husband was at the front, and 12 marks in winter, with 6 marks extra for each child, the separation allowance in England was at least six times that scale. Many wives received an income larger than they had ever enjoyed before. Some of them, undoubtedly, spent it at the public-house. The War Office regarded the allowance as a charity, to be administered through agencies which recalled the lady bountiful, to be withdrawn if the wife's conduct did not commend itself to the police, who were requested

by the Department to keep an eye on her while her husband risked his life at the front. Labour quickly shattered these illusions. The working man would enlist, but not under a stigma to his women folk to which no officer would allow his wife or daughter to be subjected. Yet the officer in his turn received for the first time something like a living income, and became an independent economic unit.

Not less significant was the demand for a pension scheme. Pitt and his generation fought their wars without recognising any obligation to the men whose lives were broken in the same, and to their dependants. After the Boer War, a few pensions were paid ; but in 1914 it was agreed that if some men went to the battle while others stayed at home, the men at home should pay all the costs, which should include substantial indemnities to the injured. To fix a scale was by no means an easy matter. It was obviously desirable to avoid the scandalous abuse of pensions which followed the American Civil War. But if the details had still to be worked out, the principles of the business were settled by Parliament before Christmas, to which date we carry this section of our record.

Thus did Great Britain, out of her abundance, scatter her largesses, much of it announced, and the rest adroitly concealed, by a paternal censorship. We adhere to our rule of refraining from anticipation. Mr. Lloyd George prophesied five years of plenty, and after that the inevitable

nemesis which follows from depleted reserves and heavy taxation. But this we may say, Great Britain waged war with lavish resources which put her in a different category from the other combatants. The estimate of 10s. per man per day which held good, so it was reckoned, for the Franco-German War, was far below the British outlay. Never in the history of war had there been so careful and masterly a handling of the community behind the firing line, and it was possible for the Prime Minister to claim that the sustenance of the working classes was more substantial than at any previous period in their industrial development.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE POLICY OF PRESIDENT WILSON

AT the outbreak of war the United States, guided by President Wilson, declared herself neutral. It was a neutrality so strict that the seamen of the American Navy were forbidden to sing the Tipperary song which had captured the ear of the British soldier. It applied to finance, for it was laid down that no belligerent loan should be floated in New York. Recruiting for the Canadian contingent was suppressed, though, for all that, men crossed the frontier to enlist. Mr. Schwabe of the Steel Trust promised the President that he would build no submarines for delivery to combatants during the war, and legislation was proposed which would apply this self-denying ordinance to all munitions. The theory was that if it be illegal for a neutral Government to sell rifles to a belligerent, why should it not be illegal for the private citizen to do so, if he lives under a neutral Government? Out of this theory there naturally arose the question, What are munitions of war? Orders to the value of 200,000,000 dollars had been placed with

the United States, and these orders to some extent compensated her traders for loss of business occasioned by the situation in Europe. What, then, was the difference in principle between supplying boots and supplying shrapnel ? It might be that of the two the boots were of a higher military value. The mere fact that the subject was seriously discussed showed that the United States was far in advance of Europe as regards her conceptions of neutrality. When the Balkan Wars were raging, the armament firms did not hesitate to supply both sides with the means of destroying one another. To men in the business, the battle of Kirk-Kilisse did not present itself as a conflict between Bulgar and Turk, but as a useful test of Schneider and Krupp artillery. At the very moment when Austria was presenting her ultimatum, Great Britain was building battleships for use by Greece against Turkey, and other battleships for use by Turkey against Greece. According to the accepted rules of the game, Americans were thus at full liberty to sell warships, weapons, and ammunition to anyone and everyone. As a matter of history, they did so. The delivery of these goods was a different matter ; and with Britain in command of the sea, it was clear, as the American Ambassador at Berlin somewhat unkindly reminded the German Government, that there might be a difficulty in landing consignments on the shores of the Fatherland.

Neutrality was held to be essential to the high rôle of peacemaker which, as in the case of the

Russo-Japanese War, the President might be called upon to fulfil. At an early stage in the struggle, appeal was made to him, as to an umpire, on a number of disputed points. The Kaiser alleged and the Allies denied (with countercharges) the use of dum-dum bullets. American representatives were asked to adjudicate upon the treatment of prisoners. It was to the White House that Belgium brought her bitter complaint of atrocities and incendiarism. The American Embassies became diplomatic clearing-houses for the exchange of prisoners, transmission of money, and all the correspondence which must go forward, even from belligerent to belligerent. These manifold duties were assiduously performed, and on controversial matters, however plain the facts, President Wilson steadily declined "to form or express a final judgment." "Justice," said he, "will be done, where justice is due." Yet when, in December, he talked of peace, he was met by the *Cologne Gazette* with a polite yet firm intimation that in a war with England, the motherland of the United States, Germany could never accept the arbitral verdict of America. The United States, so it was contended, had ranged her sympathies decisively on the side of the Allies. Indeed, months earlier the tone of her Press had evoked a protest in Berlin, where, apparently, it was imagined that in America, as in Germany, newspapers are under State control. Criticisms rained on Washington from both camps. Mr. Bryan had repeatedly to defend himself against

Germany's complaints. Pro-Britons did not like President Wilson's birthday messages to the Kaiser.

The neutrality of the Republic, though conscientious, implied self-restraint rather than indifference. The first sensation of the American, when he learnt that Europe had been plunged into war, was a profound astonishment. In his hospitable and orderly land the Prussian and the Pole, the Austrian, the Frenchman and the Russian, are all welcome, on the simple condition that they will agree to live at peace, under one tolerant yet authoritative flag. And the policy succeeded. Year by year the United States grew, not only in population, but in dignity, in the courage to face great problems at home and abroad, and, last but not least, in political rectitude. Millions of men and women whose descent lay in countries where there is only subjecthood to despotism, learnt the meaning of citizenship. The war meant that similar men and women, with no more quarrel with each other than these, were killing and being killed by thousands a day.

The tragedy was not only a surprise but a grievance. America might keep out of it, but that did not prevent a collapse in Wall Street. We have already discussed the failure of the exchanges between New York and London between St. Louis and Liverpool. The mere fact that Great Britain happened to be a belligerent while the United States happened to be a neutral,

did not exempt one community more than another from the losses inflicted on both. The trade with Germany was suddenly cut off, not by the British Fleet alone, but by the condition of Germany itself. Her railways were monopolised for transport. Her manhood was under arms. Her credit was bespoken for war loans. To the American man of business it was a grave matter of complaint that commercial relations should have been developed under the highest Imperial sanction, that orders should have been placed and credit invited, while all the time the Government chiefly concerned was meditating what was in effect a repudiation of the bond. Great Britain had guaranteed Belgium. Great Britain was part of the continental system. But America was wholly innocent, whether of complicity or of obligation.

The grievance was emphasised by the discomfort and danger to which scores of thousands of American citizens were undeservedly exposed. Never in the history of the world has there been a community so rapidly and so completely organised on virgin soil as the Republic of the West. It is a country with a great past, but the past is in Europe, three thousand miles distant. To visit Europe has been for generations of Americans an act of reverence as much as recreation. The dollars spent in European hotels are often the savings of years, the fruits of a fine and farsighted self-denial. The pilgrimages are none the less reverent because they are intellectual

and educative rather than superstitious, and at all times a safe conduct for pilgrims has been among the courtesies of the bitterest conflict. That safe conduct was not in terms denied. No one supposes that of deliberate ill intent Germany, France, and England caused trouble to American tourists. But it was part of the state of war that the belligerent Powers should be preoccupied. There was no time for politeness. Trains and boats were held up. Drafts could not be changed into cash. Valuable baggage, including all manner of cherished personal belongings, was lost. To people of both sexes and all ages, not perhaps in robust health, it was an intolerable experience, and the public opinion, thus represented, could not but ask who was responsible.

It cannot be said that England took much trouble to secure a favourable answer. The American Press is the most formidable and complex organisation of news in the whole world. There is nothing in any other country with which to compare it. The masters of that vast machine were men worthy of cultivation at a time like this, even by an Empire so illustrious as Great Britain. With characteristic nonchalance the Government left these newspapers to take their chance. If cabling had been unrestricted, this course might have been defended. But there was a censorship of all messages dispatched from Great Britain. The censorship was controlled from the War Office and the Admiralty, where civilian sentiment was subordinate. Lord

Kitchener especially discounted the importance of publicity. To his mind no harm could follow the suppression of news; the whole risk lay in disclosure. This being the rule at headquarters, the censors played for safety. Even the usual codes which business houses adopt were cancelled. In the offices of great American agencies the tables were littered with cablegrams, paid for at high rates, the fate of which was as uncertain and as horrible as the fate of the fathers at Dinant and Louvain. Delay, mutilation, slaughter, these were the measures meted out to the speeches of the Prime Minister himself and Sir Edward Grey. It is due to England to say that she mishandled her censorship because it was foreign to the spirit of her institutions. Journalists and officers were unaccustomed to that kind of work. If want of tact could have alienated America, she would have been by this time fighting on the side of the Hohenzollern.

Of Germany the reverse was true. She understood not only the art of obliterating unwelcome comment, but also the more delicate art of suggesting comment that would be useful. Her Ambassador at Washington, Count Bernstorff, was an accomplished diplomatist, of liberal sympathies, and long experience of England and the English. He was always accessible to reporters. Germany had established large and thriving financial interests in the United States, where her people numbered many millions. In every country such interests react upon the Press, and

at this crisis the friends of the Fatherland left nothing to chance. All that flattery, money, remonstrance, and even threats could do was done to secure a hearing for and an acceptance of the German case. Sir Henry Norman tapped an amusing message in which, by wireless, the German Press agents were instructed to "change" an article and "deck it out," so that it should appear in a different garb in different South American journals!

The situation was the more uncertain because there rested upon President Wilson the responsible duty of holding his judgment in suspense. A word from him, indicating bias, would fatally impair his prestige as the one commanding Head of a State not involved in the conflict. He had to be all the more reticent because of his close association, in language, sympathy, and personal friendships, with Great Britain. For years he had been a familiar figure in the English Lake District. His study of English politics had been careful and not unfruitful. There was nothing in common between his view of life and the outlook of the Prussian militarist. His position resembled that of the Pope who, with six cathedrals in flames, was obviously indignant, yet could not say so, because he was representative of all Catholics, and not only of those who happened to be so cruelly maltreated.

We are thus bound to ask ourselves why, despite these adverse facts, the American view of the conflict was at the outset so decisively anti-

Teutonic. Germany was right in her conviction that ever since the days of President Cleveland's message on Venezuela, the relations between London and Washington had steadily improved. When the two peoples used words like liberty and constitution, they meant the same thing. One might fight for Cuba, the other might fight for South Africa, but both of them aimed at granting self-government, and both had the courage to act according to the aim. The Monroe doctrine for South America was not different in essence from Russia's Monroe doctrine for the Balkans, and in both cases it was Germany that desired to disturb the doctrine. Moreover, when the crisis came, Great Britain, animated undoubtedly by the spirit of Lincoln and Washington, was risking her civil unity over the experiment of granting Home Rule for Ireland. For the first time since the Act of Union, the Irish-American vote was appeased. Indeed, the attack upon Belgium, a Catholic country, resulted in a curious fusion of Protestant and Catholic sentiment.

Statesmen in Washington had not forgotten certain unpleasant experiences of German diplomacy. In 1895, Lord Salisbury had sharply contested President Cleveland's extension of the Monroe doctrine to a boundary dispute between British Guiana and Venezuela. The financial disasters that followed President Cleveland's message revealed to both countries the abyss into which they would fall if they quarrelled over such trifles, and arbitration speedily cleared up the

trouble. The second Venezuelan crisis arose in 1902, not over frontiers but over debts, and here Germany was included with Great Britain as creditor. Germany's cruisers promptly disposed of three Venezuelan gunboats, and the United States was at once thrown into ferment. The British attitude was trusted. Americans knew that, whether it be frontier or financial obligations, England only wanted a straight settlement of the particular dispute, and afterwards the *status quo*. But Germany was credited with using debts in Venezuela, as she used murders of missionaries in China, for the purpose of obtaining a foothold on a continent remote from her frontier. That foothold would introduce what President Monroe called "the system" of Europe, the same system that produced the Holy Alliance, and "to extend (this) system to any portion of this hemisphere" was, according to the famous doctrine, "dangerous to our peace and safety." Even in a case where Germany and England were thus associated, American opinion, which did not underestimate President Castro's peccadilloes, distinguished clearly between the motives of the two Powers.

A second illustration, very pertinent to German diplomacy in the Balkans, was recalled even to the shortest memory. Germany had tried by a trick, and had failed, to make trouble between Great Britain and the United States. The narrative, though familiar, is significant. When President McKinley was confronted by war with Spain, certain European Powers, led by Austria,

appealed for peace. The appeal was presented by Lord Pauncefote, the popular and venerable British Ambassador. Before agreeing to put it forward, Lord Pauncefote sought and received assurances from the President that the appeal would not be inconvenient. He declined in terms to associate himself with a further movement, promoted by Germany, which aimed at bringing pressure to bear on the United States in the interests of Spain. Yet, despite this refusal, Germany at a later date attributed to Great Britain's initiative the rejected scheme of intervention, and sought to work up prejudice against Lord Pauncefote. Under the allegations, the health of Lord Pauncefote gave way, but at his death Berlin received an answer. Presidential honours were accorded to the remains of the diplomatist who had fallen victim to that incorrigible duplicity which has for centuries been part of Prussia's armoury in negotiation. Americans have not forgotten and never will forget the moral.

For many years the great men of both nations had agreed. London had been favoured with Ambassadors like Mr. Choate, Mr. Whitelaw Reid, and Dr. Page, who held a position far removed from the customary diplomatic restraints. They were admitted freely into the close intimacies of England's social and political life. At Washington, by a stroke of good fortune, the Ambassador had been Lord Bryce, whose name was a household word in every American university. Under his frank leading, the British Foreign Office was able

to settle many difficult outstanding problems, and so to complete a century of unbroken peace within the English-speaking sphere. If Lord Bryce wrote the best book on the American Constitution, Admiral Mahan, an officer of the United States Navy, was the highest authority on British sea power. He died while war was raging, and his last letters bespoke his loyalty to the Anglo-Saxon bond. That bond was cemented by two signal examples of good faith between nations. When Mr. Gladstone referred the Alabama claims to Arbitration, and when President Wilson, on his side, insisted upon equitable tolls for the Panama Canal, they laid the foundations of a friendship deeper than any formal alliance.

We must here mention another and not less strenuous personality. The history of Europe in this first decade of the twentieth century may be summed up as a duel between the German Emperor and Mr. Andrew Carnegie. Both men were endowed with wealth, the one by inheritance and the other by commerce. Both men displayed a strange blend of idealism and hardness, but the hardness of the one was military and the hardness of the other was industrial. The German Emperor built a Navy. Andrew Carnegie built a palace of peace—built it with American dollars, and while cities fell and oceans were mined, Holland and The Hague remained an oasis, uninvaded save by refugees. Austria's Serbian ultimatum meant that, for the moment, Andrew Carnegie had been beaten. The soldiers had carried the day. It is

characteristic of the man that he endeavoured, even in that hour of disappointment, when his life-work lay in ruins, to claim, if not approval, at least fair-play, for the German Emperor.

To destroy all that was intended at The Hague was one object, indeed the main object, of German policy. The scrap of paper which guaranteed Belgium was only one of the many which were torn to fragments. By refusing mediation, by laying unanchored mines, by dropping bombs, by levying tribute, by bombarding undefended towns, by destroying ancient monuments, by authorising pillage, and by scores of similar acts, Germany broke her word, and with it the law of nations. To the United States such anarchism was of vital concern. The Republic had grown to manhood under a scrap of paper. That written Constitution may have been, at times, an irksome fetter. It subjected representative institutions to the revision of the lawyers. But it was a sacred symbol of law and equal dealing, and if the mental outlook of Germany was to prevail in Europe, the American Constitution would be directly challenged. South America was an inviting field for preliminary intrigue. With barely 40 millions of inhabitants, the Continent was manifestly under-developed. Its polities were only too corrupt. Its resources were calculated to provoke the covetous. Germany's actual quarrel with Great Britain foreshadowed a possible quarrel in future years with the United States.

The very explanations of the German case by

Count Bernstorff only accentuated these suspicions. He warned Canada that if she sent contingents of troops to Great Britain, Germany would hold herself free to land troops in the Dominion. The American Press inquired sarcastically whether the invading army would march through New England, and if so, whether the cities of Maine would be treated like the cities of Belgium. Count Bernstorff was ready enough to discuss terms of peace, but they were not very promising. In October he said that Germany would be satisfied with all the French colonies, including Morocco, Algeria, and Tunis; French provinces in Europe, including 15 millions of inhabitants; an indemnity of 2000 million dollars; a free tariff with France for twenty-five years; the destruction of all French fortresses; the suppression of recruiting in France for twenty-five years; the handing over to Germany by France of 3 million rifles, 2000 guns, and 40,000 horses; with other trifles. It was no wonder that President Wilson declared that the talk of disarmament was "not only impracticable but silly," and that the situation was "no child's play." Even in December, Herr Dernburg appeared to entertain the strangest ideas. He disclaimed an intention by Germany to annex European territory, *except where the frontiers show weakness.* But he proposed to absorb Belgium by a customs union and by fortifications on the Scheldt, to be controlled from Berlin. All cables were to be neutralised. Great Britain was to evacuate the North Sea. Any country that

wished to join Germany was to be allowed so to do, but there was, apparently, no complementary stipulation that a country should be permitted, if it so desired, to escape from Germany. Nor was there any proposal to compensate Belgium for losses inflicted.

Into this turmoil Mr. Roosevelt plunged with an energy all his own. He had employed his years of retirement in travelling far beyond the Rocky Mountains, or even that new river which he discovered in Brazil. He had seen for himself the rule of Great Britain in Egypt and Uganda. He had attended the solemn obsequies of that other Edward, the Seventh. He had become so convinced an Imperialist that he did not hesitate, when addressing an audience in the Guildhall of London, to tell the English how, in his opinion, their Empire should be administered. He devoted days to sharing the sports of Sir Edward Grey, with whom he discussed politics and natural history. On neutrality his views were as robust as himself. He held that the United States, being a party to The Hague Conventions, was false to her position in the world when she remained silent on gross and manifest breaches of that Convention. He did not demand, merely, that by the intervention of neutrals the war should be brought to a conclusion. He explicitly condemned Germany.

President Wilson did not surrender to the trumpet-calls of his formidable rival. As week followed week, the United States confined her action to works of mercy. A Christmas ship

brought gifts for soldiers' children. The presence in Brussels of Mr. Whitlock, the American Minister, was doubtless a safeguard for that menaced city. More important than all, the people of the United States undertook the heavy task of convoying food to the Belgian people, who, by the million, were dispossessed of home and of larder. It was a delicate business. The conquest of Belgium meant that, during a cold and wet winter, with typhoid raging and waters stagnant, the unfortunate country must share the shortages which were already embarrassing Germany herself. Indeed, Belgium was ruthlessly raided of supplies in order that the German troops might be fed. At the British War Office it was argued with reason that if American supplies reached Brussels, other food would be released for combatant use; but, in the interests of humanity, the objection was overruled, and some mitigation of the famine was achieved.

We have elsewhere indicated how profoundly American sentiment was outraged by the destruction of Rheims and Louvain. These were not the only aggravating events. When Prussia called Turkey to her aid she struck a further blow at the feelings of the United States. For a generation American missionaries had laboured in Armenia, Macedonia, Constantinople, and the Holy Land. They had witnessed untold miseries and unmentionable crimes. A Christian Power now urged upon the Turk the duty of slaying the Christian within his borders, and especially the

English-speaking Christian. An American cruiser, the *Tennessee*, was quickly in trouble at Smyrna, and no wonder. Throughout Asia Minor hell was let loose.

When Christmas drew near, the future conduct of the affair by the United States was shrouded in mystery. Peace was not in sight. Even the armistice proposed by the Pope could not be arranged. The net effect of the war on American policy was an increase in the navy and in the small standing army of few over 100,000 men. It was unavoidable. For the United States this struggle was both eastern and western. Japan held herself free to retain Kiao-Chou. Her rising power could not be ignored. Germany had undoubtedly tampered with the neutrality of certain South American Governments whose wireless stations, worked by Germans, had assisted the squadron of Admiral von Spee. The delight with which the United States greeted the destruction of that squadron by the British Navy was a measure of the relief that she felt at the removal of an incubus to trade and a cause of possible embarrassment to American diplomacy.

We think it well to reserve for a future occasion a full treatment of the determined attempt by Germany to embroil the United States in war against the Allies. During the Napoleonic struggle, England's handling of neutral shipping was so distasteful to the American Republic that hostilities ensued. In December, 1914, a situation, superficially similar, was created by President

Wilson's note to Sir Edward Grey, in which severe complaint was made of the detention of American vessels, bound for neutral ports, contiguous to Germany. We may doubt whether that document was intended to be taken very seriously. Certainly, the rejoinder from the British Foreign Office left little more to be said upon the points specifically raised. At the same time, the President's Shipping Bill was being pressed forward, despite the obvious international complications to which it might lead, and public opinion in London was disturbed and perhaps a little resentful over President Wilson's anxiety over copper, following, as it did, his extreme reticence over Louvain. When Lord Rosebery, in a speech, made casual mention of the United States, there was a protest, followed by the cry of "Dollars." It was the expression of the popular, uninstructed view of the trans-Atlantic position. Mr. William Watson hurled his rhymes at his cousins across the water, and Professor Oliver Lodge, in more guarded language, warned all whom it might concern, that there was no question of arbitrating impartially between the Allies and Germany, after the behaviour of Germany, as here recorded. We cannot avoid the mention of these utterances. But we hasten to add that the real sympathies of the American People, though they might be obscured, were never in serious doubt, as a very few weeks were sufficient to show.

## C H A P T E R X V I

CHRISTMAS, 1914

THE war began with the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia, which was published on Friday, the 24th of July. Five months of accumulating loss and misery, during which 1500 millions sterling was spent on bloodshed and the damage to property reached another 500 millions, brought Europe to another Friday, Christmas, the festival of peace and goodwill among men. The Pope, to whom the war seemed like a scourge of anger by which the Almighty is exacting penalties from those nations that have ignored His worship, appealed for a truce of God, but in vain ; and it was on Christmas Day that seven British aeroplanes, supported by a cruiser and destroyers, dropped bombs on the fortified naval base of Cuxhaven, at the mouth of the Elbe. The fight—a strange echo of the traditional angels' song—was a skirmish, but the spectacle of Zeppelins, aeroplanes, cruisers, and submarines, all engaged in the same action, struck the imagination. A British airman reached Brussels and left a Zeppelin shed in a cloud of smoke.

The war was undoubtedly stirring, not only the passions of men, but what the forgotten evangelist, Mr. Moody, would have called their souls. The men who enlisted were not ne'er-do-wells, who had lost the zest of life. They were deliberately risking that which they had learnt to value. Death was to them a new prospect, and they faced it with a certain cheerful reverence. We catch a glimpse of the camp tent of an evening, full of song, of smoke, and of laughter, yet also a place of service and prayer. As the ships, filled with soldiers, glided into a French port, the McKinley hymn, as it came to be called—*Nearer to Thee*—the last strain that was heard through all else as the *Titanic* sank—was caught up from one boat to the other, the prelude to Mons. Catholic Irishmen stood with bowed heads before they rushed to the charge. “Sing to us” called the Germans from their trenches on that Christmas morning, and the British soldier pulled out his hymn book, answering with—*Abide with Me*. Even in France the priest-conscript,—they numbered 20,000,—unfrocked as it were by war, but in reality reconsecrated to his high duty, became once more a comrade and counsellor—a friend of the Republic and of freedom. With the outrage on Rheims, Rationalist France returned, we might almost say, to the days of Joan of Arc, that one saint in the calendar whose statues were honoured by Paris with undiminished veneration. In London, 60,000 persons attended a day’s prayer meeting in St. Paul’s Cathedral.

It would not be correct to say that these five months decided nothing. Japan had finally terminated German prestige in the Far East, and was displaying no inclination to hand back Kiao-Chou to China. Australia had added to her possessions a number of adjacent German islands, and had thus acquired a little Empire of her own. South Africa had crushed without difficulty the rebellion of De Wet, and, under General Botha's leadership, was preparing to conquer for herself the colony of German West Africa. Egypt and Cyprus had passed irrevocably under the British Crown. The main trade routes of the world were restored to commerce. But, important as were these results, the main objects of the war were still unattained. They were defined in identical terms by Mr. Asquith and M. Viviani, the Prime Minister of France. Belgium must be won back and indemnified by Germany. Alsace-Lorraine must be restored to France. And Prussian militarism must be destroyed. After five months of it, none of these aims—which left Russia's reward to be determined otherwise—were realised. Belgium was still in Prussia's grip, her capital mined, her people starving or in exile, her King an intrepid yet throneless soldier in the ranks. In Alsace, France had obtained a foothold, and Alsatian deputies sat in her Chamber. But neither Metz nor Strassburg had been invested, and these fortresses, after all, dominated the lost provinces. “Our return is final,” said General Joffre. “You are now French for ever. . . . I bring you

the kiss of France." Just so; but the fighting continued.

As for Prussian militarism, it was, for the moment, triumphant. The Emperor William, shaken only in health, received divine honours from his people. Von Kluck in an Army Order refers with adulation to "the presence of the Most Exalted War Lord" among his troops. It was an attempt in the twentieth century to deify a Roman Cæsar. Germany had, for the moment, utterly destroyed the entire fabric of international law and obligation. All the hopes that had centred around The Hague Conferences were ruthlessly shattered. Deeds had been done in France, in Germany, in Poland, and in Serbia for which mankind, aroused to unsleeping anger, would at whatever cost exact retribution. The Prussians knew this, and the knowledge that they could expect no mercy made them desperate. Over the country the military authorities established a despotism for which the only pretext was terror. The regular troops were supplemented by innumerable boys and older men. These half-trained levies were marched at the head of advancing columns. On their bodies the rifle-fire of the Allies was to expend itself, and those bodies, when prostrate, were to act as cover for the seasoned forces behind. British soldiers, who did not quail before the fiercest onslaught, turned sick at the duty of annihilating lads who stumbled forward, for all practical purposes unarmed, with their hands in front of their faces. A French

writer tells us positively that the raw recruits thus exposed had their senses dulled by spirits or ether. It is, at least, not unlikely, and the German soldier's story that they were chained to their machine guns, if insufficiently substantiated, is none the less in line with the Prussian conceptions of military necessity.

Under such stress as this, Parliamentary institutions throughout Europe were reduced to a shadow. Every Prime Minister, like Bismarck, "called his dog '*Reichstag*.'" Parties in the House of Commons were unanimous for the war. Mr. Ramsay Macdonald did, indeed, attack not only the wisdom of Sir Edward Grey, but also his good faith, alleging that if France had marched through Belgium, Great Britain would have raised no objection. The charge, being hypothetical, could be neither proved nor disproved, but it was contemptuously repudiated, and the incident ended Mr. Macdonald's career as leader of the Labour Party. Mr. Henderson succeeded him, and signed, jointly with Mr. Asquith and Mr. Bonar Law, a recruiting circular for householders. In Germany, also, the Socialists, as a force for peace, were crushed. Herr Liebnecht declined to vote for a War Credit, but his protest was for the time being academic. In neutral countries the Socialists easily developed a programme. They demanded complete disarmament and a restoration of the map to what it had been before the war broke out. The groups which associated themselves with Mr. Norman Angell appealed for

a more open diplomacy and for State ownership of all armament firms. That State ownership would include the prohibition of export in armaments, and would incidentally sterilise a firm like Krupp's, which celebrated the war by adding millions to its already swollen and most profitably employed capital. It was doubtless a satisfaction to German soldiers to know that the admirable artillery which dealt destruction in their ranks as they endeavoured to hack their way through to Warsaw had been designed and constructed in works financed by Essen.

The Quakers were divided on the war. Horrified as they were by the disaster, there were many who asked themselves how international law, which is the alternative to force, can continue at all if one State is to be permitted to flout it so flagrantly as Germany had done. Was there or was there not a right vested in nations to enforce agreements on those who would ignore them? To talk of friendship was useless until good faith be established, and good faith is impossible if scraps of paper are torn up. On the other hand, there were Quakers, not less respectful of international law, who urged that the Prussian evil was of the mind and soul, and that war would never cure it. They would decline to fight, but, in the not less arduous duties of mercy, they would be pre-eminent. One of the brightest pictures in this dark landscape is that of young men and women of this small yet noble society labouring to restore confidence and home in dismantled French villages.

Fifty years hence, war will doubtless present itself to men as a curse as irrational and as indefensible as slavery. But with all Europe groaning under the visitation, there were, none the less, those, even in England, who argued that the slaughter should be regarded as a prelude to yet severer militarism than ever. Why, asked the *Morning Post*, did we not listen to the warnings of Lord Roberts and institute compulsory service? How absurd to talk of the millennium with the world set upon bloodshed! "Only by militarism can we guard against militarism." In truth, Germany was utterly unrepentant. She winced at finding her people described as Huns, barbarians, and *bosches*. She was alarmed by the military and diplomatic miscalculations of her rulers. Some few of her writers dared to suggest that the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine was a mistake which must not be repeated in Belgium. But her general attitude was well expressed by Count Bernstorff when he declared that if Germany were robbed of territory, or otherwise humbled, she would arm every dog, cat, and child, with a view to revenge. At this Christmas time, the utmost that even an optimist could expect was that Germany would quickly collapse, that she would sullenly submit to the loss of Alsace-Lorraine and Prussian Poland; that she would agree to a naval arrangement with Great Britain, and compensate Belgium. No one imagined that such terms would leave Germany in a chastened frame of mind. For thirty years she would be, doubt-

less, too exhausted to renew the struggle. And the only question would be whether, during that period of reflection, public opinion in Germany, instructed by taxation, would rend the military caste.

It could not be suggested that, up to this moment, the war had evoked a revolutionary spirit. The Princes of Germany were not unrepresentative of the people by whose side they fought, were wounded, and died. Never in his long reign had the Tsar been so popular in Russia, and his Generalissimo was a Grand Duke. King Albert was, by consent, the hero of the war, and the King of England, if we may say so with respect, displayed a sympathy with his people at home, and a simple, unaffected comradeship with his troops at the front which added affection to the loyalty that he commanded, as the symbol of imperial unity. In Austria and Hungary there were rumblings not to be ignored. But they were not anti-monarchic. The dissensions were racial, not republican. The Slav subjects of Franz Joseph did not object to Thrones, as such. What they wanted was inclusion under a Serbian throne. It was fairly clear that, as a result of the war, Prussia would be compelled to grant a real constitution to her people. Bethmann-Hollweg hinted at this in the Reichstag—"one man equal to another, one man reaching out his hand to the other for a single and a sacred aim." In Russia, also, the Duma might receive new powers. But, at Christmas, 1914, there was no Commune in

Europe. All that could be said was that whereas France disposed of her aristocrats by the guillotine, Germany and Austria, by turning the aristocracy into officers, secured the same result through the bullets of their enemies. The best families were decimated.

Perhaps the most damning fact about these five months of war was not the cost in blood and treasure, but the failure of the Generals to arrive at a decision. A war of conquest is bad enough, but a war of attrition, in which there are no real victories and no real defeats, is the greatest calamity of all. The Kaiser's plan was simple enough. He struck straight at the capital cities. By entering Paris, he hoped to make terms with France. By occupying Belgrade, he would drive Servia into submission. If Prussians captured Warsaw, Russia would be ready for a bargain. The Germans at Calais would terrorise England. But none of these things happened. And even the fall of Brussels and Antwerp left Belgium, bleeding indeed and starving, yet resolutely opposed to German rule. All the sacrifices on both sides had, up to that date, come to nothing, except that 100,000 refugees had fled to England, and that one-third of the Belgians left behind were starving.

On the side of the Allies, it was also for the moment stalemate. Russia crossed the Caucasus, and was in touch with the Turkish Armies, but her headway was slow. Germany on her side was perturbed by the restiveness of the Turks under her draconic tutelage, and no wonder. Vehicles,

animals, machinery, tools, cereals, railways—all were commandeered. Banks had virtually ceased to exist, and the economic position was declared to be worse than when Bulgaria was hammering at the gates of Constantinople.

Serbia had for the third time driven the Austrian invader from her borders, and with severe loss, but Serbia was not yet master of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and so far was she from establishing herself on the Adriatic, that even Cattaro, the key to Montenegro, still held out. Yet consider how Serbia had been laid waste. For scores of miles her countryside was deserted and blackened. Fierce as were the Serbs themselves, they were no fiercer than the Austrians, who spared neither age nor sex. Raging disease, foul and neglected wounds, hunger, an utter absence of sanitation—these were the accompaniments of the Austrian advances and the more hurried Austrian retreats. All the world marvelled at Serbia's inexhaustible determination to fight her own battle, without seeking the assistance of her rival, Bulgaria, who declined to co-operate in the war as long as Monastir remained outside her frontiers. Yet, even after Serbia's recovery in December, a military phenomenon for which it is hard to name a parallel, the fate of the little State still remained on the knees of the gods.

Even in September, the plight of Austria was deplorable. "Trade," wrote a sufferer, "is at a standstill, our children are being taken from us, and we must tremble for our safety night and day, just

to satisfy the ambition of the iron-fisted Kaiser." Croatia was seething with disaffection. Count Tisza, hitherto a stalwart upholder of the Dual Monarchy, intimated to his imperial master that Hungary must, at this crisis, consider first her own integrity, threatened by the incursions of the invader through the snow-laden passes of the Carpathians. The Austrian Armies, whether dragooned or not by German officers, were consistently defeated under circumstances that can only be described as tragic. The land was stricken with poverty, mourning, disease, and by an ever-deepening indignation against those who had wantonly betrayed its interests.

In Poland, the struggle was on a larger scale; yet, here again, five months of it produced no decision. While Russia pushed forward in Galicia, from Lemberg to Przemysl and from Przemysl to Cracow, Von Hindenberg, assisted by Germany's strategic railways, struck no fewer than three times, from different points, on Warsaw. Twice did he relieve the pressure on Przemysl, and his last thrust brought a respite to Cracow. But although the energy of the Germans was titanic, although they and the Russians were slain by tens of thousands, so that no count was kept of the slaughter, yet the mastery of Poland remained uncertain, and Poland itself was half destroyed. What a monstrous method it was of determining the happiness and well-being of a province !

We read of a wayside crucifix in Galicia. One outstretched arm has been shot away by shrapnel.

But the face remains, gazing upon “ a newly made grave wherein lie the shattered remains of 124 men who died almost at the foot of this sacred figure.” Eydtkuhnens, writes another eye-witness in an article aptly entitled “ The Beauty of War,” “ is a terrible sight, has no semblance of a town. There is nothing in it to loot.” Again :

“ Once I noticed a ripe apple on a tree in one of the looted villages ; it caused me some surprise. It was something that had escaped the plunderer.”

“ Money ! ” screamed an old woman in Senlis, to whom a coin had been offered, “ What can I do with money in this starving wilderness ? For the love of God give me bread—I am starving ! ” A hard-bitten war correspondent returned from northern France. He talked of the country carts filled with men, delirious with pain, their blood dripping through the boards on to the road. Suddenly his eyes betrayed him and his voice broke. He could say no more. It was the same across the frontier. Cologne was named “ the capital of wounded Germany,” and along the Rhine every house was a hospital.

“ My dear wife,” wrote a German soldier, “ I have just been living through days that defy imagination. I should never have thought that men could stand it. Not a second has passed but my life has been in danger, and yet not a hair of my head has been hurt. It was horrible ; it was ghastly. But I have been saved for you and for

our happiness, and I take heart again, although I am still terribly unnerved. God grant that I may see you again soon, and that this horror may soon be over. None of us can do any more ; human strength is at an end.

"The 7th, 8th, and 9th of September we were constantly under shell and shrapnel fire, and suffered terrible losses. I was in a house which was hit several times. The fear of a death of agony which is in every man's heart, and naturally so, is a terrible feeling.

"How often I thought of you, my darling, and what I suffered in that terrifying battle which extended along a front of many miles near Montmirail, you cannot possibly imagine."

Of Antwerp, it was said bitterly that the only factory which was really busy was one that had been transformed into a crematorium for burning the dead wholesale ; in bundles, as they arrived, their uniforms thrifitly removed for the next batch of recruits. "Powerful families," said a Berlin correspondent, "are extinguished. It is an endless misery which is borne with the greatest resignation." Daily the *Kreuz Zeitung* published fifty names of officers slain. Here is a typical announcement :

"On November 12, died on French soil, side by side, the death for the Fatherland, my dear husband, our good father August Schroeder, Major and battalion commandant, Knight of the Iron Cross, 2nd class, Possessor of the Hesse Medal for courage and Knight of several orders ; together with my eldest son and our beloved brother, Hoost Schroeder, lieutenant."

'Even the spy Lody, shot at the Tower, rose in his last letter to something like eloquence.

"**M**Y DEAR ONES,—I have trusted in God, and He has decided that my hour has come, and I must start on the journey through the dark valley like so many of my comrades in this terrible war of nations. May my life be honoured as a humble offering on the altar of the Fatherland. A hero's death on the battlefield is certainly finer, but such is not to be my lot, and I die here, in the enemy's country, silent and unknown; but the consciousness that I die in the service of the Fatherland makes death easy. The Supreme Court-martial of London has sentenced me to death for military conspiracy. To-morrow I shall be shot here in the Tower. It is a consolation to me that I am not treated as a spy. I have had just judges, and I shall die as an officer, not as a spy. Farewell. God bless you.—**HANS.**"

The German women, though thus bereaved, sometimes overflowed with generous kindness even to prisoners of war; they offered fruit and flowers and chocolate. "We are all filled with disgust at such behaviour," was the Junker comment, and rules were passed against any such "unnatural" conduct being repeated. "What!" cried a German soldier set to guard certain wounded British prisoners. "They obliged to do their duty! No, they're swine, paid swine. They get moncy for this foul work—the swine." It was not a typical saying; the prisoners on both sides were treated as fairly as prisoners of war ever will be treated. But it revealed the volcanic fires which

raged in the hearts of men. The very dictionary became suspect, and Germans boycotted words like "lift boy," "gold-tipped," "pardon," "serviette," and "adieu."

On the West, the situation was unlike anything recorded in the annals of war. We have seen that with the battle of the Aisne began the new fighting by trenches. Over a distance of four hundred miles these improvised fortifications were extended, until towards the north they reached the Dunes and the coast. For weeks at a time the position of the combatants scarcely altered. Continuous bombardment, the use of hand grenades, sapping and mining, desperate encounters with the bayonet, all the ruses and arts of battle, merely resulted in the capture or re-capture of a trench or half a village, a windmill, or a few trees. It seemed as if the British moved instinctively to that stretch of the Allied lines where the fight was hottest; and the battle of Ypres, though it was only a violent accentuation of the entire conflict, was perhaps the largest, the most exacting struggle in the annals of the Army. In describing the Battle of Waterloo, Sir Edward Creasy says :

"The Emperor, however, persisted in employing the old system of attack, with which the French generals often succeeded against continental troops, but which had always failed against the English in the Peninsula."

That Emperor was Napoleon ; the old system of attack was by column, and, as Creasy points out,

it never succeeded against British musketry when followed up by the British bayonet. The Old Guard at Waterloo broke before that rejoinder, yet one hundred years later, not far from the same spot, another Emperor ordered another Imperial Guard to break that same thin line, and once more the masses of soldiers were discomfited.

In the spring the new armies trained by Lord Kitchener would be ready. The French would be completely equipped with uniform and rifles. The Germans would be weakened by their exertions. Italy would have great forces mobilised for whatever might be her part in the great game. Time certainly seemed to favour the Allies. But we refrain from looking forward. We think rather of those trenches where, for days and nights, men fought, waist-deep in water, enduring noise which shook their nerve, deprived them of speech, and even of reason. We think of those villages where, one by one, the cottages collapsed into dust, and the garnered harvests were left to burn themselves out; where children cried for food to mothers who had none; where dysentery and worse than dysentery spread apace, no doctor to alleviate the sufferings, and no priest to console the dying—we think of this and ask, how long? It may be that at a future date we shall write again on what is left of Europe, and on the new Europe that will arise on what is left. For the moment it is enough to say that old things are passing away. Respect for Governments is inherent in mankind. It should be jealously cherished. But

Governments ought to be the expression of law, of equity, and of benevolence. We believe that Prussia is answerable, solely, for this war. But let no Government imagine that its institutions will escape a searching scrutiny. Statesmen are supposed to be wiser than the people who accept their guidance. Statesmanship in Europe has been revealed as organised folly. We know not whether, amid the welter of literature on the war, this analysis of its causes, its progress, and its more immediate consequences will find a place. But to those who have read thus far our final word will be, that there is still in Europe a common cause, the cause of the common people, so often deceived, so cruelly oppressed, and that the time has come for the people to make it dangerous for the rulers to instigate and enlarge the crimes which to-day fill millions of homes with sorrow and despair.

In September the Pope addressed King George as "the guardian of Peace and the Master of Justice." It was a notable tribute, prompted doubtless by Rheims; but Germany, so busy all over the world, did not neglect the Vatican, and His Holiness sustained neutrality by refusing, as he said, to dictate to the Almighty what should be the issue of the war. In December, for the first time since the Reformation, Great Britain, by way of countering the Emperor's intrigues, dispatched an Envoy to the Pope, Sir Henry Howard, not unofficially, but with the full authorisation of his Government. Dr. Clifford, speaking

for the Baptist communion, regretted the advance ; but it was inevitable. Prussia had betrayed Protestantism. Claiming for herself a peculiar prestige in the region of critical scholarship, she had, by her professoriate, laboured to sterilise Christian faith, miracle, ethics, tradition. In a measure her intellectual conquest over the Gospels had carried with it Western scholarship. But suddenly the abyss of negation yawned before Europe, not a clear, serene space where all things lovely and true may flourish, but a sulphurous chasm whence trickery, delusion, bloodshed, pillage, jealousy, and hatred rose like poisonous clouds to fill the vacuum left by the discredited Incarnation. The German professor could not read the documents of his own time ; how was he to be trusted to read the immortal literature of the past ? He was revealed as a man far removed from unprejudiced detachment of mind ; a man blinded by prepossessions, by theories, by palpable sophistries, and by an utter disregard for other civilisations than his own. Of what value was his opinion on Galilee ? *Deutsches Christentum* was a book widely circulated in Germany before the war. Take this typical sentence :

" Our country was in danger of being condemned on the Day of Judgment. For this reason we consider war a good thing ; for this reason war is a holy business to us, and this is why our God is a God of War. . . . The danger that threatens the German people is the distortion of its sober individualism into mere selfish Philistinism. Now

the best possible antidote to this poison is a healthy zest for war. . . . God, who has made our nation the standard-bearer of the highest culture which the history of the world has as yet recorded, resolved that He would not allow us to become the victims of the false culture of the Philistines. It is not the trader who is the most pious of men, but he who aims at achieving the highest. And to attain the heights, the courage for war must be present."

A score of similar passages from newspapers, the writings of German personages, and from the Emperor himself, could be cited as evidence of what the Editor of the *Westminster Gazette* called this "homicidal mania." It was shared by Count Reventlow, by Admiral von Tirpitz, by Bethmann - Hollweg. Obviously it meant an end to Germany's authority in matters ecclesiastical, and, one must add, a blow to her trade. "Commercial and industrial brutality" was Sir William Ramsay's description of the new methods pursued by the Prussians in the development of trade. It may have been true, it may have been false; but it was, at least, rendered plausible by events. A shrewd observer remarked that the Germanic fury was in essence a recrudescence of Mohammedanism armed for conquest with the sword.

Turn back again to those trenches. See how, by stealthy toil, the combatants dig their way closer to one another and still closer, till not a hundred feet separate them. They can hear each other's voices. And with what result? Fiercer fighting

it may be oftentimes, but occasionally there occurs a veritable miracle of trustful friendship. A rabbit will run between the lines and be shot. A German boldly exposes himself, picks it up, and offers it to the English in return for cigarettes. The cry will be, "Show yourselves," and, simultaneously, faces will rise above the earthworks, and man will again look at man without a shot passing. Officially, there was no truce at Christmas; but along miles of trenches friend and foe grasped hands, exchanged gifts, and shared a common festivity.

In death they were not divided; in the grave there was peace. We have the picture of an Englishman, a Frenchman, and a German all mortally wounded, yet each consoling the other through the last moments of their common agony. We have, too, the picture of the British officer decorated for the same act with the Victoria Cross and the Iron Cross, dying, too, with his decorations on him, because he carried an accidentally wounded German doctor back into the German lines. Such incidents should surely convince us that the things which unite us must prevail over all else. But what are those things? Not merely a refraining from ambitions, from hatreds, from jealousies. Europe will never cease from war until she finds something better to do. That better business is neither trade nor philosophy nor even art, though it may include all these. It is, in one word, sacrifice; the modern equivalent of that adventurous altruism which made of St.

Francis, St. Elizabeth, of Florence Nightingale, John Howard, and David Livingstone, an inspiration to the world. The courage of goodness must outshine the courage of battle. The alternative to Nietzsche and Bernhardi is not Sir Edward Grey and Mr. Asquith. It is a Wesley, a Luther, a Savonarola, a Tolstoy. A sterner war even than this war must be declared, if that demoniac violence is to be exorcised which has already rent our civilisation into fragments.

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